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LIFE OF SHERIDAN. BY THOMAS MOORE.\*

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A NEW work—even though it be a large quarto—with the name of Moore in the title-page, is sure, at any time, to create an intense interest in the reading public. At present that interest is considerably heightened by circumstances, independent of the high and well-earned reputation of the author. The volume has appeared in a season when we are accustomed to a kind of literary famine, and it treats of a subject which is interesting alike to the scholar and the politician—the lover and the patriot. Next to Lord Byron, we know of no man whose memoirs could be more acceptable than those of Sheridan; and, indeed, the life of this extraordinary man—at least in a moral point of view—is more instructive, and perhaps more entertaining, than that of the noble bard's possibly could be. His course was more devious; he continued longer on the public stage, and performed a more busy and intricate part. We cannot contemplate with indifference the career of one who raised himself, by the mere strength of unassisted, uncultivated talent, from comparative obscurity to a seat in the legislature, and a place—a pre-eminent place—in the republic of letters. The player's son, as he was insultingly denominated by the aristocratic brood at Harrow, became the companion and adviser of the heir-apparent; and, though some dark spots disfigure the disk of his splendid name, there are few—very few—who have been exposed to similar temptations, more guiltless of error than Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

It is now more than seven years since Mr. Moore promised the world the memoirs before us, and he tells us in the preface that the first four chapters were written at that time. The delay which has taken place, we are sorry to say, is attributable to the circumstance which obliged Mr. Moore to reside for some time on the

Continent. But, though we should have gladly hailed this memorial to the merits of Sheridan at an earlier period, we cannot say that we regret its not having appeared much sooner. Time is favourable to the development of truth; and the biographer has afforded testimonials in abundance that he has been diligent in seeking after information. Such of his friends as apprehended that the complicated nature of his subject would embarrass him have been agreeably disappointed; for the most virulent Tory must acknowledge that he has been singularly candid. In no one point have his partialities blinded him to truth; for, while he points out the errors of the *Whigs*, he extenuates many of the faults attributed to their opponents. We are quite confident that Mr. Moore has written nothing hitherto that does him more honour than the work before us.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan was born in the month of September, 1751, at No. 12, Dorset Street, Dublin. His grandfather is well known to have been the friend of Dean Swift; and his father was the celebrated rival of Garrick, as well as author of an English Dictionary, and various works on Elocution. His mother, too, was distinguished for her literary attainments, and has left behind her numerous memorials of her taste and genius. Born thus with an hereditary claim to literature, it is remarkable that Richard and his elder brother were pronounced by their parents and their master, Mr. Whyte, of Grafton Street, 'impenetrable dunces.'

On the removal of Mr. Sheridan's family to England, Richard was sent, in 1762, to Harrow School, where he remained until his eighteenth year, beloved by his masters and fellow-pupils, but without having given any indications of superior intellect. At this time, however, he appears to have been conscious of his own powers,

\* Memoirs of the Life of the Right Honourable Richard Brinsley Sheridan. By Thomas Moore. London, Longman, 1825.

though he wanted industry to cultivate them.

While at Harrow he formed an intimacy with a youth named Halhed, in conjunction with whom he produced a farce in imitation of 'Midas;' but, through the indolence and procrastination of Sheridan, it was never brought to maturity. Soon after these *tyros* entered into a literary partnership, brought out the first number of a periodical, and published a translation of *Aristænetus*, the complete failure of which seems to have blasted the hopes the young poets entertained of being enriched by their devotion to the muses.

In 1770 the elder Mr. Sheridan removed to Bath, where the family of Mr. Linley then resided. An acquaintance between the fathers led to an intimacy between their children; and Richard and his brother Charles became enamoured, unknowingly to each other, of Miss Linley—a lady deservedly celebrated for her musical talents and correctness of deportment.

In addition to the numerous admirers which the beauty and accomplishments of Miss Linley attracted, there was one whose base and unhallowed passion excited feelings of disgust, while it alarmed the youthful lover for the safety of his mistress. The name of this wretch was Matthews—a man of property, and an inmate in Mr. Linley's family, who made use of the opportunities he enjoyed to annoy the daughter of his host by his indiscreet attentions.

'In consequence of this persecution, and an increasing dislike to her profession, which made her shrink more and more from the gaze of the many, in proportion as she became devoted to the love of one, she adopted, early in 1772, the romantic resolution of flying secretly to France, and taking refuge in a convent, intending, at the same time, to indemnify her father, to whom she was bound till the age of twenty-one, by the surrender to him of part of the sum which Mr. Long had settled upon her. Sheridan, who, it is probable, had been the chief adviser of her flight, was, of course, not slow in offering to be the partner of it. His sister, whom he seems to have persuaded that his conduct in this affair arose from a wish solely to serve Miss Linley as a friend, without any design or desire to take advantage of her elopement as a lover, not only assisted

them with money out of her little fund for house expenses, but gave them letters of introduction to a family with whom she had been acquainted at St. Quentin. On the evening appointed for their departure, while Mr. Linley, his eldest son, and Miss Maria Linley, were engaged at a concert, from which the young Cecilia herself had been, on a plea of illness, excused, she was conveyed by Sheridan in a sedan-chair from her father's house in the Crescent, to a post-chaise which waited for them on the London road, and in which she found a woman, whom her lover had hired, as a sort of protecting Minerva, to accompany them in their flight.

'It will be recollected that Sheridan was at this time little more than twenty, and his companion just entering her eighteenth year. On their arrival in London, with an adroitness which was, at least, very dramatic, he introduced her to an old friend of his family (Mr. Ewart, a respectable brandy-merchant in the city), as a rich heiress who had consented to elope with him to the Continent; in consequence of which the old gentleman, with many commendations of his wisdom, for having given up the imprudent pursuit of Miss Linley, not only accommodated the fugitives with a passage on board a ship which he had ready to sail from the port of London to Dunkirk, but gave them letters of recommendation to his correspondents at that place, who with the same zeal and dispatch facilitated their journey to Lisle.

'On their leaving Dunkirk, as was natural to expect, the chivalrous and disinterested protector degenerated into a mere selfish lover. It was represented by him, with arguments which seemed to appeal to prudence as well as feeling, that, after the step which they had taken, she could not possibly appear in England again but as his wife. He was, therefore, he said, resolved not to deposit her in a convent, till she had consented, by the ceremony of a marriage, to confirm to him that right of protecting her which he had now but temporarily assumed. It did not, we may suppose, require much eloquence to convince her heart of the truth of this reasoning; and, accordingly, at a little village not far from Calais, they were married about the latter end of March, 1772, by a priest well known for his services on such occasions.'

On Sheridan's return he called Matthews to account for having published a defamatory notice during his absence. The result of this meeting was the disgrace of this hoary villain, who immediately after retired to his estate in Wales. Public opprobrium



having followed him to his retreat, he was induced, by the advice of a kind of Sir Lucius O'Trigger, to seek another meeting with young Sheridan, who was imprudent enough to afford him an opportunity of regaining his forfeited honour. The second duel had nearly terminated a life, to which, as Mr. Moore says, 'we are indebted for an example as noble in its excitements, and a lesson as useful in its warnings, as ever genius, and its errors, have bequeathed to mankind.'

Although Sheridan and Miss Linley had been privately married in France, they deemed it necessary to conceal the fact. The young lady, in the mean time, had returned to her father, and was fulfilling her engagements at an oratorio held at Oxford, when the result of the second duel was communicated to her. From some words which fell from her at the moment, the secret of her marriage was discovered; and Mr. Linley consented to the union of the youthful lovers. They were married the 13th of April, 1773.

'A few weeks previous to his marriage,' says Mr. Moore, 'Sheridan had been entered a student of the Middle Temple. It was not, however, to be expected that talents like his, so sure of a quick return of fame and emolument, would wait for the distant and dearly-earned emoluments, which a life of labour in this profession promises. Nor, indeed, did his circumstances admit of any such patient speculation. A part of the sum which Mr. Long had settled upon Miss Linley, and occasional assistance from her father (his own having withdrawn all countenance from him), were now the only resources, besides his own talents, left him. The celebrity of Mrs. Sheridan as a singer was, it is true, a ready source of wealth; and offers of the most advantageous kind were pressed upon them, by managers of concerts both in town and country. But with a pride and delicacy, which received the tribute of Dr. Johnson's praise, he rejected at once all thoughts of allowing her to re-appear in public; and, instead of profiting by the display of his wife's talents, adopted the

manlier resolution of seeking an independence by his own. An engagement had been made for her some months before by her father, to perform at the music-meeting that was to take place at Worcester this summer. But Sheridan, who considered that his own claims upon her had superseded all others, would not suffer her to keep this engagement.'—P. 84.

He seems to have now employed himself on a variety of literary projects, none of which produced any substantial benefit, until the appearance of his comedy of 'The Rivals,' at Covent-Garden, on the 17th of January, 1775. Its success, at first, was doubtful; but, being recast for the second night, it rose at once into public favour.

'The celebrity,' says Mr. Moore, 'which Sheridan had acquired, as the chivalrous lover of Miss Linley, was of course considerably increased by the success of *The Rivals*; and, gifted as he and his beautiful wife were with all that forms the magnetism of society,—the power to attract, and the disposition to be attracted,—their life, as may easily be supposed, was one of gaiety both at home and abroad. Though little able to cope with the entertainments of their wealthy acquaintance, her music, and the good company which his talents drew around him, were an ample repayment for the more solid hospitalities which they received. Among the families visited by them was that of Mr. Coote (Purden), at whose musical parties Mrs. Sheridan frequently sung, accompanied occasionally by the two little daughters\* of Mr. Coote, who were the originals of the children introduced into Sir Joshua Reynolds's portrait of Mrs. Sheridan as St. Cecilia. It was here that the Duchess of Devonshire first met Sheridan; and, as I have been told, long hesitated as to the propriety of inviting to her house two persons of such equivocal rank in society, as he and his wife were at that time considered. Her Grace was reminded of these scruples some years after, when "the player's son" had become the admiration of the proudest and fairest; and when a house, provided for the Duchess herself at Bath, was left two months unoccupied, in consequence of the social attractions of She-

\* \* The charm of her singing, as well as her fondness for children, are interestingly described in a letter to my friend Mr. Rogers, from one of the most tasteful writers of the present day:—"Hers was truly a 'voice as of the cherub choir,' and she was always ready to sing without any pressing. She sung here a great deal, and to my infinite delight; but what had a peculiar charm was, that she used to take my daughter, then a child, on her lap, and sing a number of childish songs with such a playfulness of manner, and such a sweetness of look and voice, as was quite enchanting."

ridan, which prevented a party then assembled at Chatsworth from separating. These are triumphs which, for the sake of all humbly-born heirs of genius, deserve to be commemorated.—P. 108, 9.

In the same year he produced 'St. Patrick's Day,' a farce, and 'The Duenna,' an opera. Such was the reception of the latter, that it was played for sixty-three nights successively. His prospects were now so flattering, that about this time he entered into a negotiation with Garrick for the purchase of his share in Drury-Lane Theatre. In 1777 this business was completed, and Sheridan became part proprietor.

'Mr. Sheridan,' says his biographer, 'was now approaching the summit of his dramatic fame;—he had already produced the best opera in the language, and there now remained for him the glory of writing also the best comedy. As this species of composition seems more, perhaps, than any other, to require that knowledge of human nature and the world which experience alone can give, it seems not a little extraordinary that nearly all our first-rate comedies should have been the productions of very young men. Those of Congreve were all written before he was five-and-twenty. Farquhar produced the Constant Couple in his two-and-twentieth year, and died at thirty. Vanbrugh was a young ensign when he sketched out the Relapse and the Provoked Wife, and Sheridan crowned his reputation with the School for Scandal at six-and-twenty.'

'It is, perhaps, still more remarkable to find, as in the instance before us, that works which, at this period of life, we might suppose to have been the rapid offspring of a careless, but vigorous, fancy,—anticipating the results of experience by a sort of second-sight inspiration,—should, on the contrary, have been the slow result of many and doubtful experiments, gradually unfolding beauties unforeseen even by him who produced them, and arriving, at length, step by step, at perfection. That such was the tardy process by which the School for Scandal was produced, will appear from the first sketches of its plan and dialogue, which I am here enabled to lay before the reader, and which cannot fail to interest deeply all those who take delight in tracing the alchemy of genius, and in watching the first slow workings of the menstruum, out of which its finest transmutations arise.'

"Genius," says Buffon, "is Patience;" or, (as another French writer has explained his thought)—"La Patience

cherche, et le Génie trouve;" and there is little doubt that to the co-operation of these two powers all the brightest inventions of this world are owing;—that Patience must first explore the depths where the pearl lies hid, before Genius boldly dives and brings it up full into light. There are, it is true, some striking exceptions to this rule; and our own times have witnessed more than one extraordinary intellect, whose depth has not prevented their treasures from lying ever ready within reach. But the records of Immortality furnish few such instances; and all we know of the works, that she has hitherto marked with her seal, sufficiently authorize the general position,—that nothing great and durable has ever been produced with ease, and that Labour is the parent of all the lasting wonders of this world, whether in verse or stone, whether poetry or pyramids"—P. 154, 5.

In the following year he became the purchaser of Mr. Lacy's moiety in the theatre, for the sum of 45,000*l*. 'By what spell,' says Mr. Moore, 'all those thousands were conjured up, it would be difficult accurately to ascertain. That happy art, in which the people of this country are such adepts—of putting the future in pawn for the supply of the present—must have been the chief resource of Mr. Sheridan in all these latter purchases.'

'We must now,' says Mr. Moore, 'prepare to follow the subject of this Memoir into a field of display, altogether different, where he was in turn to become an actor before the public himself, and where, instead of inditing lively speeches for others, he was to deliver the dictates of his eloquence and wit from his own lips. However the lovers of the drama may lament this diversion of his talents, and doubt whether even the chance of another School for Scandal were not worth more than all his subsequent career, yet to the individual himself, full of ambition and conscious of versatility of powers, such an opening into a new course of action and fame must have been like one of those sudden turnings of the road in a beautiful country, which dazzle the eyes of the traveller with new glories, and invite him on to untried paths of fertility and sunshine.'

'It has been before remarked how early, in a majority of instances, the dramatic talent has come to its fullest maturity. Mr. Sheridan would possibly never have exceeded what he had already done, and his celebrity had now reached that point of elevation, where, by a sort of optical deception in the atmosphere of fame, to re-



main stationary is to seem, in the eyes of the spectators, to fall. He had, indeed, enjoyed only the triumphs of talent, and without even descending to those ovations, or minor triumphs, which in general are little more than celebrations of escape from defeat, and to which they, who surpass all but themselves, are often capriciously reduced. It is questionable, too, whether, in any other walk of literature, he would have sustained the high reputation which he acquired by the drama. Very rarely have dramatic writers, even of the first rank, exhibited powers of equal rate, when out of the precincts of their own art; while, on the other hand, poets of a more general range, whether epic, lyric, or satiric, have as rarely succeeded on the stage. There is, indeed, hardly one of our celebrated dramatic authors (and the remark might be extended to other countries) who has left works worthy of his reputation in any other line: and Mr. Sheridan, perhaps, might only have been saved from adding to the list of failures, by such a degree of prudence or of indolence as would have prevented him from making the attempt. He may, therefore, be said to have closed his account with literature, when not only the glory of his past successes, but the hopes of all that he might yet have achieved, were set down fully, and without any risk of forfeiture, to his credit; and, instead of being left, like Alexander, to sigh for new worlds to vanquish, no sooner were his triumphs in one sphere of action complete than another opened to invite him to new conquests.—P. 203, 4.

The period of Sheridan's political debut, in 1780, is thus eloquently pictured by his biographer:

‘The period at which Mr. Sheridan entered upon his political career was, in every respect, remarkable. A persevering and vindictive war against America, with the folly and guilt of which the obstinacy of the court and the acquiescence of the people are equally chargeable, was fast approaching that crisis which every unbiassed spectator of the contest had long foreseen, and at which, however humiliating to the haughty pretensions of England, every friend to the liberties of the human race rejoiced. It was, perhaps, as difficult for this country to have been long and virulently opposed to such principles as the Americans asserted in this contest, without being herself corrupted by the cause which she maintained, as it was for the French to have fought in the same conflict, by the side of the oppressed, without catching a portion of that enthusiasm for liberty which such an alliance was calculated to inspire. Accordingly, while the

voice of philosophy was heard along the neighbouring shores, speaking aloud those oracular warnings which preceded the death of the great Pan of despotism, the courtiers and lawyers of England were, with an emulous spirit of servility, advising and sanctioning such strides of power as would not have been unworthy of the most dark and slavish times.

‘Not only were the public events, in which Mr. Sheridan was now called to take a part, of a nature more extraordinary and awful than had often been exhibited on the theatre of politics, but the leading actors in the scene were of that loftier order of intellect which Nature seems to keep in reserve for the ennoblement of such great occasions. Two of these, Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox, were already in the full maturity of their fame and talent,—while the third, Mr. Pitt, was just upon the point of entering, with the most auspicious promise, into the same splendid career:—

“Nunc cuspide patris  
Inclytus, Herculeas olim moture sagittas.”

His first speech was a failure.

‘It was on this night, as Woodfall used to relate, that Mr. Sheridan, after he had spoken, came up to him in the gallery, and asked, with much anxiety, what he thought of his first attempt. The answer of Woodfall, as he had the courage afterwards to own, was, “I am sorry to say I do not think that this is your line—you had much better have stuck to your former pursuits;” on hearing which, Sheridan rested his head upon his hand for a few minutes, and then vehemently exclaimed, “It is in me, however, and, by G—, it shall come out!”

‘It appears, indeed, that upon many persons, besides Mr. Woodfall, the impression produced by this first essay of his oratory was far from answerable to the expectations that had been formed. The chief defect remarked in him was a thick and indistinct mode of delivery, which, though he afterwards greatly corrected it, was never entirely removed.’

‘Not only,’ says our author, ‘were the occasions very few and select, on which he offered himself to the attention of the House, at this period, but, whenever he did speak, it was concisely and unpretendingly, with the manner of a person who came to learn a new road to fame,—not of one who laid claim to notice upon the credit of the glory he brought with him. Mr. Fox used to say that he considered his conduct in this respect as a most striking proof of his sagacity and good taste;—such rare and unassuming displays of his talents being the only effectual mode he could have adopted, to win on the attention of his audience and gradually esta-

blish himself in their favour. He had, indeed, many difficulties and disadvantages to encounter, of which his own previous reputation was not the least. Not only did he risk a perilous comparison between his powers as a speaker and his fame as a writer, but he had also to contend with that feeling of monopoly, which pervades the more worldly classes of talent, and which would lead politicians to regard as an intruder upon their craft, a man of genius thus aspiring to a station among them, without the usual qualifications of either birth or apprenticeship to entitle him to it.\* In an assembly too, whose deference for rank and property is such as to render it lucky that these instruments of influence are so often united with honesty and talent, the son of an actor and proprietor of a theatre had, it must be owned, most fearful odds against him, in entering into competition with the sons of Lord Holland and Lord Chatham.

‘With the same discretion that led him to obtrude himself but seldom on the House, he never spoke at this period but after careful and even verbal preparation. Like most of our great orators at the commencement of their careers, he was in the habit of writing out his speeches before he delivered them; and, though subsequently he scribbled these preparatory sketches upon detached sheets, I find that he began by using for this purpose the same sort of copy-books, which he had employed in the first rough draughts of his plays.’—P. 266, 7.

In 1785, however, Sheridan became a more frequent speaker; and one occasion on which he exerted his eloquence is introduced by the patriotic pen of his biographer.

‘If the surrender of any part of her le-

gislative power could have been expected from Ireland in that proud moment, when her new-born Independence was but just beginning to smile in her lap, the acceptance of the terms then proffered by the Minister might have averted much of the evils of which she was afterwards the victim. The proposed plan being, in itself, (as Mr. Grattan called it,) “an incipient and creeping Union,” would have prepared the way less violently for the completion of that fated measure, and spared at least the corruption and the blood which were the preliminaries of its perpetration at last. But the pride, so natural and honourable to the Irish—had fate but placed them in a situation to assert it with any permanent effect—repelled the idea of being bound even by the commercial regulations of England. The wonderful eloquence of Grattan, which, like an eagle guarding her young, rose grandly in defence of the freedom to which itself had given birth, would alone have been sufficient to determine a whole nation to his will. Accordingly, such demonstrations of resistance were made both by people and parliament, that the Commercial Propositions were given up by the minister, and this apparition of a Union withdrawn from the eyes of Ireland for the present—merely to come again, in another shape, with many a “mortal murder on its crown, and push her from her stool.” Mr. Sheridan took a strong interest in this question, and spoke at some length on every occasion when it was brought before the House.’—P. 307.

‘Early as was the age at which Sheridan had been transplanted from Ireland†—never to set foot upon his native land again—the feeling of na-

\* There is an anecdote strongly illustrative of this observation, quoted by Lord John Russell in his able and lively work “On the Affairs of Europe from the Peace of Utrecht.”—Mr. Steele (in alluding to Sir Thomas Hanmer’s opposition to the Commercial Treaty in 1714) said, “I rise to do him honour”—on which many members who had before tried to interrupt him, called out ‘Tatler, Tatler;’ and, as he went down the House, several said ‘It is not so easy a thing to speak in the House;’ ‘He fancies, because he can scribble, &c. &c.’—Slight circumstances, indeed, (adds Lord John,) but which show at once the indisposition of the House to the Whig party, and the natural envy of mankind, long ago remarked by Cicero, towards all who attempt to gain more than one kind of pre-eminence.”

† In 1787 he exerted himself so much on Irish questions that he was tauntingly designated the ‘Self-appointed Representative of Ireland.’

Perhaps we cannot do better than give here a short extract from this memoir, in which the author expresses his own attachment to the land of his birth.

‘I am aware that, on the subject of Ireland and her wrongs, I can ill trust myself with the task of expressing what I feel, or preserve that moderate historical tone, which it has been my wish to maintain through the political opinions of this work. On every other point, my homage to the high character of England, and of her institutions, is prompt and cordial;—on this topic alone my feelings towards her have been taught to wear “the badge of bitterness.” As a citizen of the world I would point to England as its brightest ornament;—but as a *disfranchised* Irishman, I blush to belong to her.’



tionality remained with him warmly through life, and he was, to the last, both fond and proud of his country. The zeal with which he entered, at this period, into Irish politics, may be judged of from some letters, addressed to him in the year 1785, by Mr. Isaac Corry, who was at that time a member of the Irish opposition, and combated the Commercial Propositions as vigorously as he afterwards, when Chancellor of the Exchequer, defended their "consummate flower," the Union.'

During the four months of the Rockingham administration, in 1782, Sheridan was appointed Secretary of the Treasury; which he lost, of course, on the discomfiture of his party. 'The Whigs,' says Mr. Moore, 'who had now every reason to be convinced of the aversion with which they were regarded at court, had lately been, in some degree, compensated for this misfortune by the accession to their party of the Heir Apparent, who had, since the year 1783, been in the enjoyment of a separate establishment, and taken his seat in the House of Peers, as Duke of Cornwall. That a young prince fond of pleasure, and impatient of restraint, should have thrown himself into the arms of those who were most likely to be indulgent to his errors, is nothing surprising, either in politics or ethics. But that mature and enlightened statesmen, with the lessons of all history before their eyes, should have been equally ready to embrace such a rash alliance, or should count upon it as any more than a temporary instrument of faction, is, to say the least of it, one of those self-delusions of the wise, which show how vainly the voice of the Past may speak amid the loud appeals and temptations of the Present. The last Prince of Wales, it is true, by whom the popular cause was espoused, had left the lesson imperfect, by dying before he came to the throne. But this deficiency has since been amply made up; and future Whigs, who may be placed in similar circumstances, will have, at least, one historical warning before their eyes, which ought to be enough to satisfy the most unreflecting and credulous.'

'In some points, the breach, that now took place between the Prince and the King, bore a close resemblance to that which had disturbed the preceding reign. In both cases, the Royal parents were harsh and obstinate—in both cases, money was the chief source of dissension—and in both cases, the genius, wit, and accomplishments of those with whom the Heir Apparent connected himself, threw a splendour round the political bond between them, which prevented even themselves from perceiving its looseness and fragility.'

'In the late question of Mr. Fox's India Bill, the Prince of Wales had voted with his political friends in the first division. But, upon finding afterwards the King was hostile to the measure, his Royal Highness took the prudent step (and with Mr. Fox's full concurrence) of absenting himself entirely from the second discussion, when the Bill, as it is known, was finally defeated. This circumstance, occurring thus early in their intercourse, might have proved to each of the parties in this ill-sorted alliance, how difficult it was for them to remain long and creditably united. On the one side, there was a character to be maintained with the people, which a too complacent toleration of the errors of royalty might—and, as it happened *did*—compromise; while, on the other side, there were the obligations of filial duty, which, as in this instance of the India Bill, made desertion decorous, at a time when co-operation would have been most friendly and desirable. There was also the perpetual consciousness of being destined to a higher station, in which, while duty would perhaps demand an independence of all party whatever, convenience would certainly dictate a release from the restraints of Whiggism.'

'The calm security into which Mr. Pitt's administration had settled, after the victory which the Tory alliance of king and people had gained for him, left but little to excite the activity of party-spirit, or to call forth those grand explosions of eloquence, which a more electric state of the political world produces. The orators of Opposition might soon have been reduced, like Philoctetes wasting his arrows upon geese at Lemnos, to expend the armoury of their wit upon the Grahams

and Rolles of the Treasury bench. But a subject now presented itself—the impeachment of Warren Hastings—which, by embodying the cause of a whole country in one individual, and thus combining the extent and grandeur of a national question with the direct aim and singleness of a personal attack, opened as wide a field for display as the most versatile talents could require, and to Mr. Sheridan, in particular, afforded one of those precious opportunities, of which, if Fortune but rarely offers them to genius, it is genius alone that can fully and triumphantly avail itself.—P. 317.

It arose from a variety of circumstances that the 'prosecution of Mr. Hastings, even after the accession of the minister, excited but a slight and wavering interest; and, without some extraordinary appeal to the sympathies of the House and the country, some startling touch to the chord of public feeling, it was questionable whether the inquiry would not end as abortively as all the other Indian inquests that had preceded it.

In this state of the proceeding, Mr. Sheridan brought forward, on the 7th of February, in the House of Commons, the charge relative to the Begum Princesses of Oude, and delivered that celebrated speech, whose effect upon its hearers has no parallel in the annals of ancient or modern eloquence. When we recollect the men by whom the House of Commons was at that day adorned, and the conflict of high passions and interests in which they had been so lately engaged—when we see them all, of all parties, brought (as Mr. Pitt expressed it) "under the wand of the enchanter," and only vying with each other in their description of the fascination by which they were bound—when we call to mind, too,

\* Mr. Moore has the following singular remark, at page 374, 5. 'It is also, I think, a mistake, however flattering to my country, to call the school of oratory, to which Burke belongs, *Irish*. That Irishmen are naturally more gifted with those stores of fancy, from which the illumination of this high order of the art must be supplied, the names of Burke, Grattan, Sheridan, Curran, Canning, and Plunkett, abundantly testify. Yet had Lord Chatham, before any of these great speakers were heard, led the way, in the same animated and figured strain of oratory; while another Englishman, Lord Bacon, by making Fancy the handmaid of Philosophy, had long since set an example of that union of the imaginative and the solid, which, both in writing and in speaking, forms the characteristic distinction of this school.'

Mr. Moore is, we think, unfortunate in adducing Bacon as an example; and, if Chatham's speeches are examined, it will be found that they have less claim to *Irish* than the speeches of *Henley*, in America. A solitary exception, however, proves little or nothing, even were it unexceptionable; and the peculiarities of Irish oratory are to be found in Irish speeches long before Chatham was born.

that he whom the first statesman of the age thus lauded, had but lately descended among them from a more aerial region of intellect, bringing trophies falsely supposed to be incompatible with political prowess—it is impossible to imagine a moment of more entire and intoxicating triumph. The only alloy that could mingle with such complete success must be the fear that it was too perfect ever to come again; that his fame had then reached the meridian point, and from that consummate moment must date its decline.

'Of this remarkable speech there exists no report; for it would be absurd to dignify with that appellation the meagre and lifeless sketch, the

"Tenuem sine viribus umbram  
In faciem Æneæ,"

which is given in the Annual Registers and Parliamentary Debates. Its fame, therefore, remains like an empty shrine—a cenotaph still crowned and honoured, though the inmate is wanting.'

His subsequent speech on the trial of Hastings was equally as felicitous;\* and it is delightful to read the testimonies which Mr. Moore has given of the pride which all the members of his family took in his triumph.

'Taking into account all the various circumstances that concurred to glorify this period of Sheridan's life, we may allow ourselves, I think, to pause upon it as the apex of the pyramid, and, whether we consider his fame, his talents, or his happiness, may safely say, "Here is their highest point."

'The new splendour which his recent triumphs in eloquence had added to a reputation already so illustrious,—the power which he seemed to have acquired over



the future destinies of the country, by his acknowledged influence in the councils of the heir apparent,—and the tribute paid to him, by the avowal both of friends and foes, that he had used this influence, in the late trying crisis of the regency, with a judgment and delicacy that proved him worthy of it,—all these advantages, both brilliant and solid, which subsequent circumstances but too much tended to weaken, at this moment surrounded him in their newest lustre and promise.

‘He was just now, too, in the first enjoyment of a feeling, of which habit must have afterwards dulled the zest, namely, the proud consciousness of having surmounted the disadvantages of birth and station, and placed himself on a level with the highest and noblest of the land. This footing in the society of the great he could only have attained by parliamentary eminence;—as a mere writer, with all his genius, he never would have been thus admitted *ad eundem* among them. Talents, in literature or science, unassisted by the advantages of birth, may lead to association with the great, but rarely to equality; it is a passport through the well-guarded frontier, but no title to naturalization within. By him, who has not been born among them, this can only be achieved by politics. In that arena, which they look upon as their own, the legislature of the land, let a man of genius, like Sheridan, but assert his supremacy,—at once all these barriers of reserve and pride give way, and he takes, by storm, a station at their side, which a Shakspeare or a Newton would but have enjoyed by courtesy.

‘In fixing upon this period of Sheridan’s life, as the most shining æra of his talents as well as his fame, it is not meant to be denied that in his subsequent warfare with the minister, during the stormy time of the French Revolution, he exhibited a prowess of oratory no less suited to that actual service, than his eloquence on the trial of Hastings had been to such lighter tilts and tournaments of peace. But the effect of his talents was far less striking;—the current of feeling through England was against him;—and, however greatly this added to the merit of his efforts, it deprived him of that echo from the public heart, by which the voice of the orator is endued with a sort of multiplied life, and, as it were, survives itself. In the panic, too, that followed the French Revolution, all eloquence, but that from the lips of Power, was disregarded, and the voice of him at the helm was the only one listened to in the storm.’—P. 434—6.

During the Regency question, in 1789, Mr. Sheridan acted a conspicuous

part. Mr. Moore at first attributes the Prince’s celebrated letter to Mr. Pitt, to him; but is subsequently obliged to give the honour of that composition to Burke. He allows his former opinion to stand as a proof of uncertainty in similar cases. It is, however, now made manifest that the Prince was not the author of any public document at this time. Mr. Sheridan has the honour of having written most of them.

‘The conduct of Mr. Sheridan on the breaking out of the mutiny at the Nore is too well known and appreciated to require any illustration here. It is placed to his credit on the page of history, and was one of the happiest impulses of good feeling and good sense combined, that ever public man acted upon in a situation demanding so much of both. The patriotic promptitude of his interference was even more striking than it appears in the record of his parliamentary labours; for, as I have heard at but one remove from his own authority, while the ministry were yet hesitating as to the steps they should take, he went to Mr. Dundas and said,—“My advice is that you cut the buoys on the river—send Sir Charles Grey down to the coast, and set a price on Parker’s head. If the administration take this advice instantly, they will save the country—if not, they will lose it; and, on their refusal, I will impeach them in the House of Commons this very evening.”

‘Without dwelling on the contrast which is so often drawn—less with a view to elevate Sheridan than to depreciate his party—between the conduct of himself and his friends at this fearful crisis, it is impossible not to concede that, on the scale of public spirit, he rose as far superior to them as the great claims of the general safety transcend all personal considerations and all party ties. It was, indeed, a rare triumph of temper and sagacity. With less temper, he would have seen in this awful peril but an occasion of triumph over the minister whom he had so long been struggling to overturn—and, with less sagacity, he would have thrown away the golden opportunity of establishing himself for ever in the affections and the memories of Englishmen, as one whose heart was in the common-weal, whatever might be his opinions, and who, in the moment of peril, could sink the partisan in the patriot.’—P. 569, 70.

‘The only question upon which he spoke this year (1800) was the important measure of the Union, which he strenuously and at great length opposed. Like every other measure, professing to be for the

benefit of Ireland, the Union has been left incomplete in the one essential point, without which there is no hope of peace or prosperity for that country. As long as religious disqualification is left to 'lie like lees at the bottom of men's hearts,' in vain doth the voice of Parliament pronounce the word "Union" to the two islands,—a feeling, deep as the sea that breaks between them, answers back, sullenly, "Separation."—P. 585.

In 1804 the office of Receiver of the Duchy of Cornwall, worth about 1500*l.* a year, was conferred on him by the Prince of Wales, who at the same time regretted that he had nothing better to give.

Next year he acted a part which requires explanation. The following extract deserves to be read with attention:—

'On the 10th of May, the claims of the Roman Catholics of Ireland were, for the first time, brought under the notice of the Imperial Parliament, by Lord Grenville in the House of Lords, and by Mr. Fox in the House of Commons. A few days before the debate, as appears by the following remarkable letter, Mr. Sheridan was made the medium of a communication from Carlton House, the object of which was to prevent Mr. Fox from presenting the petition.

"Dear Sheridan,

"I did not receive your letter till last night.

"I did, on Thursday, consent to be the presenter of the Catholic petition, at the request of the delegates, and had further conversation on the subject with them at Lord Grenville's yesterday morning. Lord Grenville also consented to present the petition to the House of Lords. Now, therefore, any discussion on *this* part of the subject would be too late; but I will fairly own, that, if it were not, I could not be dissuaded from doing the public act, which, of all others, it will give me the greatest satisfaction and pride to perform. No past event in my political life ever did, and no future one ever can, give me such pleasure.

"I am sure you know how painful it would be to me to disobey any command of his royal highness's, or even to act in any manner that might be in the slightest degree contrary to his wishes, and, therefore, I am not sorry that your intimation came too late. I shall endeavour to see the prince to-day; but, if I should fail, pray take care that he knows how things

\* \* This vain hope was expressed before the late decision on the Catholic question had proved to the Irish that, where *their* rights are concerned, neither public nor private pledges are regarded.'

stand before we meet at dinner, lest any conversation there should appear to come upon him by surprise.

"Yours ever, "C. J. F."

"Arlington Street, Sunday."

'It would be rash, without some further insight into the circumstances of this singular interference, to enter into any speculations with respect to its nature or motives, or to pronounce how far Mr. Sheridan was justified in being the instrument of this communication. But on the share of Mr. Fox in the transaction, such suspension of opinion is unnecessary. We have here his simple and honest words before us, and they breathe a spirit of sincerity from which even princes might take a lesson with advantage.'

The 'Morning Chronicle' has inferred from this, that his present Majesty is averse to the Catholic claims. We do not think so. Sheridan, in one of his letters to the prince, alludes to his royal highness's delicate situation respecting Emancipation; and Mr. Moore, at page 428, speaking of the regency, has the following remarkable words:—'The ready and ardent burst of devotion with which Ireland, at this moment, like the Pythagoreans at their morning worship, turned to welcome with her harp the rising sun, was long remembered by the object of her homage with pride and gratitude,—and, let us trust, is not even yet entirely forgotten.\*' This subject, however, requires elucidation.

In the year 1806, Sheridan entered office as treasurer of the navy—much against his inclination—but his embarrassed circumstances left him no choice. In the same year he was chosen representative for Westminster; but, at the next election, he was defeated by Sir Francis Burdett. He came in, however, for Ilchester.

Previous to 1811 the Whigs had been split into parties; and when the king's illness gave them hopes of power under the regency, we find them, with the help of Sheridan, imprudently putting it almost out of the power of the prince to honour them with his confidence. The documents relative to this affair, given by Mr. Moore, are curious and im-



portant. His royal highness, it appears, sent for Lords Grenville and Grey, to draw up his answer to the address of Parliament. They did so—but in a manner injurious to his feelings, but complimentary to their own consistency. Sheridan, who disliked the coalition, drew up an answer to the address, more agreeable to the prince; and the coalesced lords afterwards sent in a kind of remonstrance; which afforded Sheridan what he thought a good opportunity of making them feel his power.

‘Though privately alienated from them, on personal as well as political grounds, he knew that, publicly, he was too much identified with their ranks, ever to serve, with credit or consistency, in any other. He had, therefore, in the ardour of undermining, carried the ground from beneath his own feet. In helping to disband his party, he had cashiered himself; and there remained to him now, for the residue of his days, but that frailest of all sublunary treasures, a prince’s friendship.

‘With this conviction, (which, in spite of all the sanguineness of his disposition, could hardly have failed to force itself on his mind,) it was not, we should think, with very self-gratulatory feelings that he undertook the task, a few weeks after, of inditing, for the Regent, that memorable letter to Mr. Perceval, which sealed the fate at once both of his party and himself, and, whatever false signs of re-animation may afterwards have appeared, severed the last *life-lock* by which the “struggling spirit” of this friendship between royalty and whiggism still held;—

— “*dextra crinem secat, omnis et una*

*Dilapsus calor, atque in ventos vita recessit.*”

‘With respect to the chief personage connected with these transactions, it is a proof of the tendency of knowledge to produce a spirit of tolerance, that they who, judging merely from the surface of events, have been most forward in reprobating his separation from the Whigs, as a rupture of political ties and abandonment of private friendships, must, on becoming more thoroughly acquainted with all the circumstances that led to this crisis, learn to soften down considerably their angry feelings; and to see, indeed, in the whole history of the connection, from its first formation, in the hey-day of youth and party, to its faint survival after the death of Mr. Fox, but a natural and

destined gradation towards the result at which it at last arrived, after as much fluctuation of political principle, on one side, as there was of indifference, perhaps, to all political principle on the other.

‘Among the arrangements that had been made, in contemplation of a new ministry, at this time, it was intended that Lord Moira should go, as lord lieutenant, to Ireland, and that Mr. Sheridan should accompany him, as chief secretary.’—P. 662, 3.

‘The political career of Sheridan was now drawing fast to a close. He spoke but upon two or three other occasions during the session; and among the last sentences uttered by him in the House were the following;—which, as calculated to leave a sweeter flavour on the memory, at parting, than those questionable transactions that have just been related, I have great pleasure in citing:—

“My objection to the present ministry is, that they are avowedly arrayed and embodied against a principle,—that of concession to the Catholics of Ireland,—which I think, and must always think, essential to the safety of this empire. I will never give my vote to any administration that opposes the question of Catholic Emancipation. I will not consent to receive a furlough upon that particular question, even though a ministry were carrying every other that I wished. In fine, I think the situation of Ireland a paramount consideration. If they were to be the last words I should ever utter in this House, I should say, ‘Be just to Ireland, as you value your own honour;—be just to Ireland, as you value your own peace.’”—P. 677.

On the dissolution of Parliament, in 1812, he tried his old friends at Stafford; but, as his purse was not quite so heavy as that of his opponent, he lost his election. The prince regent offered to bring him in, but he declined entering Parliament with the royal mark upon him. The calamities of his life may be said now to have commenced. Drury-Lane Theatre, which was burnt in 1809, had been re-built; but Sheridan was excluded by the committee from having any thing further to do with it. Even the sum for which he disposed of his title was paid him grudgingly; and at one time he suffered the profanation of having been carried to a spunging-house.

The disorder of Mr. Sheridan, a

diseased stomach, now grew rapidly on him, while the embarrassment of his affairs helped to accelerate the approach of death. In the beginning of 1816 his powers began to fail him; but still the wretched spot where he lay down to die was not secured against the incursion of clamorous creditors; and bailiffs at length gained possession of his house. During all this time it does not appear that, with the exception of Lord Holland,\* any of his noble or royal friends called at his door, or even sent to inquire after him.

About this period Mr. Vaughan intimated to Dr. Bain that he was commissioned to appropriate two hundred pounds for Sheridan's use—to be paid at the rate of fifty pounds at a time. Mrs. Sheridan refused receiving this petty sum, as the immediate wants of her high-minded husband had been supplied from the purse of Mr. Rogers, by the hands of Mr. Moore. 'Mr. Vaughan,' says the biographer, 'always said that the donation, thus meant to be doled out, came from a royal hand; but this is hardly credible. It would be safer, perhaps, to let the suspicion rest upon that gentleman's memory—of having indulged his own benevolent disposition in this disguise—than to suppose it possible that so scanty and reluctant a benefaction was the sole mark of attention accorded by a "gracious prince and master" to the last death-bed wants of one of the most accomplished and faithful servants that royalty ever yet raised or ruined by its smiles. When the philosopher, Anaxagoras, lay dying for want of sustenance, his great pupil, Pericles, sent him a sum of money, "Take it back," said Anaxagoras; "if he wished to keep the lamp alive, he ought to have administered the oil before."'

In the mean time a sheriff's officer had arrested the dying man in his bed, but was deterred from removing him, in consequence of the physician representing the responsibility he should incur in case of death. At length an article in the 'Morning Post' arrested public sympathy in

behalf of poor Sheridan, whose door was soon thronged with such visitors as the Duke of York, the Duke of Argyll, &c.; but it was now too late. Sheridan died on the 7th of July, 1816, aged sixty-five, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. Seldom has there been such an array of rank as graced his funeral; and it was well remarked at the time by a French journal, that 'France is the place for a man of letters to live in, and England the place for him to die in.'

Mr. Sheridan lost his first wife—to whose amiable character Mr. Moore has done justice—in 1792, and was married to his second wife, the daughter of the Dean of Winchester, in 1795. This lady did not long survive her husband. She had no child. Sheridan's only son died when young.

Copious as have been our extracts from this interesting work, we cannot conclude without giving Mr. Moore's character of Sheridan.

'His political character stands out so fully in these pages, that it is needless, by any comments, to attempt to raise it into stronger relief. If to watch over the rights of the subject, and guard them against the encroachments of power, be, even in safe and ordinary times, a task full of usefulness and honour, how much more glorious to have stood sentinel over the same sacred trust, through a period so trying as that with which Sheridan had to struggle—when liberty itself had become suspected and unpopular—when authority had succeeded in identifying patriotism with treason, and when the few remaining and deserted friends of freedom were reduced to take their stand on a narrowing isthmus, between anarchy on one side and the angry incursions of power on the other. How manfully he maintained his ground in a position so critical, the annals of England and of the champions of her constitution will long testify. The truly national spirit too, with which, when that struggle was past, and the dangers to liberty from without seemed greater than any from within, he forgot all past differences in the one common cause of Englishmen, and, while others "gave but the left hand to the country," proffered her both of his, stamped a seal of sincerity on his public conduct, which, in the eyes of all England, authenticated it as genuine patriotism.'

\* Among the few who did not forsake him in his misfortune, the names of Rogers, Moore, and Dr. Bain, stand conspicuous.



'To his own party, it is true, his conduct presented a very different phasis; and if implicit partisanship were the sole merit of a public man, his movements, at this and other junctures, were far too independent and unbarnessed to lay claim to it. But however useful may be the bond of party, there are occasions that supersede it; and, in all such deviations from the fidelity which it enjoins, the two questions to be asked are—were they, as regarded the public, right? Were they, as regarded the individual himself, unpurchased? To the former question, in the instance of Sheridan, the whole country responded in the affirmative; and to the latter, his account with the Treasury, from first to last, is a sufficient answer.

'Even, however, on the score of fidelity to party, when we recollect that he more than once submitted to some of the worst martyrdoms which it imposes—that of sharing in the responsibility of opinions from which he dissented, and suffering by the ill consequences of measures against which he had protested;—when we call to mind, too, that during the administration of Mr. Addington, though agreeing wholly with the ministry, and differing with the Whigs, he even then refused to profit by a position so favourable to his interests, and submitted, like certain religionists, from a point of honour, to suffer for a faith in which he did not believe—it seems impossible not to concede that even to the obligations of party he was as faithful as could be expected from a spirit that so far outgrew its limits; and, in paying the tax of fidelity while he asserted the freedom of dissent, showed that he could sacrifice every thing to it, except his opinion. Through all these occasional variations, too, he remained a genuine Whig to the last; and, as I have heard one of his own party happily express it, was "like pure gold, that changes colour in the fire, but comes out unaltered."

'The transaction in 1812, relative to the household, was, as I have already said, the least defensible part of his public life. But it should be recollected how broken he was, both in mind and body, at that period—his resources from the theatre at an end—the shelter of Parliament about to be taken from over his head also—and old age and sickness coming on, as every hope and comfort vanished. In that wreck of all around him, the friendship of Carlton House was the last asylum left to his pride and his hope; and that even character itself should, in a too zealous moment, have been one of the sacrifices offered up at the shrine that protected him, is a subject more of deep regret than of wonder.

The poet Cowley, in speaking of the unproductiveness of those pursuits connected with wit and fancy, says beautifully—

"Where such fairies once have danced, no grass will ever grow."

But, unfortunately, thorns will grow there; and he who walks unsteadily among such thorns as now beset the once enchanted path of Sheridan, ought not, after all, to be very severely criticised.

'Having taken a cursory view of his literary, political, and social qualities, it remains for me to say a few words upon that most important point of all, his moral character.

'There are few persons, as we have seen, to whose kind and affectionate conduct, in some of the most interesting relations of domestic life, so many strong and honourable testimonies remain. The pains he took to win back the estranged feelings of his father, and the filial tenderness with which he repaid long years of parental caprice, show a heart that had, at least, set out by the right road, however, in many years, it may have missed the way. The enthusiastic love which his sister bore him, and retained, unblighted by distance or neglect, is another proof of the influence of his amiable feelings, at that period of life when he was as yet unspoiled by the world. We have seen the romantic fondness which he preserved towards the first Mrs. Sheridan, even while doing his utmost, and in vain, to extinguish the same feeling in her. With the second wife, a course, nearly similar, was run; the same "scatterings and eclipses" of affection, from the irregularities and vanities in which he continued to indulge, but the same hold kept of each other's hearts to the last. Her early letters to him breathe a passion little short of idolatry, and her devoted attentions beside his death-bed showed that the essential part of the feeling still remained.

'To claim an exemption for frailties and irregularities on the score of genius, while there are such names as Milton and Newton on record, were to be blind to the example which these and other great men have left, of the grandest intellectual powers combined with the most virtuous lives. But, for the bias given early to the mind by education and circumstances, even the least charitable may be inclined to make large allowances. We have seen how idly the young days of Sheridan were wasted—how soon he was left (in the words of the prophet) "to dwell carelessly," and with what an undisciplined temperament he was thrown upon the world, to meet at every step that never-failing spring of temptation, which, like the fatal fountain in the garden of Armida,

sparkles up for ever in the pathway of such a man :—

“ Un fonte sorge in lei, che vaghe e monde  
Ha l'acque sì, che i riguardanti asseta.  
Ma dentro ai freddi suoi cristalli asconde  
Di tosco estran malvagita secreta.”

‘ Let it never, too, be forgotten, in estimating this part of his character, that had he been less consistent and disinterested in his public conduct, he might have commanded the means of being independent and respectable in private. He might have

died a rich apostate, instead of closing a life of patriotism in beggary. He might (to use a fine expression of his own) have “ hid his head in a coronet,” instead of earning for it but the barren wreath of public gratitude. While, therefore, we admire the great sacrifice that he made, let us be tolerant to the errors and imprudences which it entailed upon him : and, recollecting how vain it is to look for any thing unalloyed in this world, rest satisfied with the Martyr without requiring also the Saint.’

#### TALES OF LOW LIFE.

By *Thomas Furlong*, Author of ‘ *Plagues of Ireland*,’ &c.

NO. II.

#### THE DRUNKARD.

ALONG Drumeondra road I strolled,  
The smoky town was just in sight—  
I met a woman, stooped and old,  
And she was in a ragged plight.  
‘ Oh! master dear, for sake of Heaven,  
In pity look on me;  
You’ll never miss a penny given  
Away in charity!  
That I’m in want the world may see—  
That I am old I’m sure appears;  
At Christmas next my age will be  
Just eight-and-sixty years.’  
‘ And how did all those years go o’er?  
What have you through that time been at?’  
‘ Oh! it would take an hour and more  
For me to tell all that.  
When I was small, ay, very small,  
To service I was sent;  
And, by my mother, I was told  
Not to be sulky, stiff, or bold;  
But, to whatever place I went,  
Still to be jumping at a call,  
And act obligingly to all.  
‘ Years past, I grew, I worked my way,  
My sweet young mistress on me doted;  
She in the kitchen stood one day,  
And there she to the cook did say  
That I must be promoted.  
‘ She thought it wrong to have me thrust  
In a dark kitchen under ground,  
Exposed to damp, and dirt, and dust,  
When other business could be found.  
Heaven be her bed! Soon after this  
My kitchen clothes aside were laid:  
Out through the Park, around the town,  
And in the squares, all up and down,  
I walked, with master and with miss,  
A dressy children’s maid.  
Oh, then what easy times I had!  
My look was gay, my heart was glad.



‘ Of gowns I had full half a score,  
I thought the stock could never fail;  
Nice borders still to each I wore,  
With flounces, a yard deep or more,  
All gathering round the tail;  
And then I had my big straw bonnet,  
That flapped and fluttered in the wind,  
And there were heaps of ribands on it,  
Tied up in knots of every kind:  
I was a tidy girl to see,  
My mistress took a pride in me.

‘ One evening I got leave to go,  
Under the care of our old cook,  
To see the showmen and the show,  
And all the tents, at that strange fair  
That’s known and talked of every where—  
The merry fair of Donnybrook:  
That fair was then, as it is now,  
The place for boozing and a row.

‘ The cook and I dressed very fine,  
And we were to be home at nine.  
We went—and heard the merryman,  
And Mr. Punch, and Mr. Clown,  
And I laughed loud at all they said,  
I thought with laughing I’d drop down.  
The cook at last to growl began,  
She talked of going home to bed:  
But she was very, very dry,  
And, in good earnest, so was I;  
She pointed to a great big tent,  
And off we both together went.  
We settled near a table’s end,  
Where she by chance had found a friend;  
A sprightly pleasant nice young man—  
God rest his soul! ’twas John M’Cann.

‘ Oh! Heavens be with you, John M’Cann!  
It’s then you were a neat young man—  
I never, never can forget  
That pleasant evening when we met:  
The cook had known him in her range  
Of friends; they talked of some they’d seen,  
And I, not willing to seem strange,  
Dropped in at times a word between;  
And John he listened still to me,  
And listened with so sweet a smile—  
And his eyes looked so roguishly,  
That I kept blushing all the while;  
Indeed I felt my cheeks quite hot,  
But yet I didn’t quit the spot.

‘ Now how it was I cannot say,  
But he a liking took to me,  
For, as we moved to go away,  
He turned and talked quite seriously;  
Up did he get from off his seat,  
And, as he stood upon his feet,  
By the two hands he held me fast,  
And swore, before a month went past,  
We man and wife should be;

The cook she laughed—I nothing said,  
But tittered, and held down my head.

‘ And faith ! before a month went by,  
His words they turned out true,  
For man and wife were John and I,

And gay as any other two :  
A little gathering I had made,

A little more my mistress gave,  
And John a cooper was by trade,

And every week a pound could save ;  
And at that time, as markets went,  
A pound was not so quickly spent.

‘ A week before our wedding-day,  
Poor John a little room had got ;

Our friends who saw it used to say  
That none could wish a cozier spot :

‘Twas two pair front, in Aungier Street,  
Near where the coachmen have their stand—

Why should I boast?—but, on my life,  
There was no struggling tradesman’s wife,

In town or country through the land,  
Could show a place so neat ;

For lots of furniture we had,  
Nice pictures too for every wall,

And I was proud, and John was glad,  
To hear our taste admired by all :—

And then it was not very dear,  
The rent was but five pounds a year.

‘ Oh ! we were both so happy there !

And we grew happier every day ;  
Upon my mind there was no care—

The table for our meals was spread ;  
When these were done some book I read,

Or sat and sewed, as humour led,  
While John at work was far away ;

And then some friend that chance might bring  
Sat with me, and we both talked on,

Sometimes of many a foolish thing ;

We prattled till the day was gone,

For I was giddy, young, and wild,

And simple as the simplest child.

‘ A woman lived next room—her name

Was Mistress Kitty Donohoe—

When first into the house I came

I often met her on the stairs,

But didn’t like her showy airs ;

But she was sprightly company,

And forced her idle chat on me

For all that I could say or do :

On a child’s errand she’d come in,

To get a needle or a pin,

Or ask what was the day about ;

And then she’d fret and blame the weather—

And sometimes slyly she’d pull out

A little flask of rum or gin,

And force me just to take a taste—

Indeed I always drank in haste,

For still my mind was full of care

Lest John should come and get us there

Tippling away together—



But fond of Mistress Donohoe,  
And fonder of the drop, I grew.

‘Of visitors she had a train—

Their names ’twould take an hour to tell;  
There was Miss Mary-Anne Magrane,  
And Mrs. Young and Mrs. Lawson,  
And Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Dawson;  
And Mrs. White, from Stocking Lane—  
As good a soul as e’er broke bread;  
At least, so Mrs. Lawson said;  
I never knew the lady well,  
But with her came Miss Jenny Bell,  
And one whose name has left my head.

Miss Degan hurried from the Coombe,  
And from the Rock ran Miss Devine—  
Sometimes they over-thronged her room,  
And then she showed them into mine:  
Off went the bottle to the shop,  
For all these ‘ladies’ loved the drop.

‘With this gay set quite great I grew,  
And John’s poor pound so tight was drawn,  
That half the week it wouldn’t do,  
And then I took his things to pawn.  
Trick followed trick—ill brought on ill—  
I saw not where my guilt began;  
Misfortune to misfortune led—  
I had some little beauty still;  
And, in a weak and wicked hour,  
When money over me had power,  
I vilely wronged my husband’s bed—  
Oh! I was false to John M’Cann.

‘And this went on twelve years and more;  
A fit of illness came at last,  
And then my conscience it was sore—  
It keenly pained me for the past.  
Oh! then that sickness just began,  
Indeed I thought I should have died;  
Poor John brought in a holy man,  
Father Fitzhenry was his name,  
And this old priest he often came  
And prayed at my bed-side;  
’Twould do you good his face to see—  
He looked all peace and piety.

‘To this good priest I told my shame—  
I told him of my sinful life;  
He called me by my proper name—  
A wicked and a worthless wife.  
Oh! the sad lesson that he gave!  
Why, till I’m rotting in the grave,  
I won’t—I can’t forget what then  
He then spoke of—but through life again  
My thoughts, my wishes, never ran  
On any but on John M’Cann.

‘I promised before God in heaven  
To leave my drinking too:—  
I made the promise; but, when given,  
I found it would not do.

Oh! sir, I was but up and well,  
 When to the drop once more I fell!  
 My husband saw that all was gone,  
 And let me for a time go on:  
 Two growing boys were all we had,  
 And they in dirty rags were clad.  
 I pawned their clothes—I pawned my own—  
 I left poor John quite bare at last;  
 My figure as a show was shown—  
 (So poor, so naked, I had grown)  
 'Twas shown as through the streets I passed;  
 And many laughed this end to see  
 Of all my former finery.

• John bore as much as man could bear,  
 But got at last quite tired of me;  
 And, in mere madness and despair,  
 He bent his course across the sea:  
 He took my William in his care,  
 As good a son as son could be;  
 For he was brought up to the trade,  
 And a smart hand he soon was made.

• Good workmen may go any where—  
 They settled at New York, 'tis said;  
 But they were not a twelvemonth there  
 When I got word that both were dead;  
 I think at first some tears I shed—  
 A tear or two I might let fall,  
 But the next *naggin* banished all.

• Poor naked Joe, my other child,  
 Among the blackguards took his round,  
 Till one fine morning, in the street,  
 By great good luck he chanced to meet  
 A Swaddling dame, all smooth and mild,  
 And in that dame a friend he found;  
 She took him home, and he was taught  
 To do as tidy servants ought;  
 For clothing he was at no cost—  
 Or food—Oh! sir, I'd bless that dame—  
 But that my boy's poor soul is lost;  
 For Joe, I tell it to his shame,  
 At once took to the holy plan—  
 A prim sly Swaddler he became;  
 And he could whine and wheedle so,  
 The servants called him, "Holy Joe;"  
 And, as he grew to be a man,  
 If any mentioned but my name,  
 I'm told he'd redden at the same;  
 And still he shunned me when I'd call:  
 'Twas hard—but I deserved it all.

Well! to the worst at last I went—  
 I've begged for twenty years and more;  
 Sometimes my heart has felt content,  
 And sometimes been both sad and sore:  
 Master! I'd be quite happy now,  
 If I to yonder shop could go;—  
 I've but this penny left, I vow—  
 And that wont get the glass, you know.  
 Do, master dear!"—I paused in vain,  
 I could not let her ask again.



## THE FATHER OF THE FORTESCUES.—CHAP. II.

‘Four or five years passed away quietly; the young lovers had found, under the friendly roof of Mr. Fortescue, the shelter and the peace which they desired. Two beautiful children, a boy and a girl, bore witness to their mutual fondness, and grew up in loveliness before them. They had but little cause for uneasiness or dissatisfaction—the only alloy, indeed, to their happiness, was the continued stubbornness of Emily’s father: he was still harsh and unforgiving; he occasionally passed his daughter in the open road, even as he would a stranger, without raising his eyes to look towards her. Even the house of God, and the presence of the ministers of religion, failed to affect him; he would meet her before the holy altar—he would tread on the very seat where they had been accustomed for years to kneel together; and, if she drew close to him, he turned round to avoid her. This mood was cherished for years; he affected a sort of ill-disguised indifference—he worked himself up to an appearance of apathy, which sat strangely on him: the struggle, however, was too palpable—Nature was not to be trifled with: it was evident from his looks and accidental expressions that he was sinking under the burden of his own feelings—that he was drooping beneath utter loneliness: this of late became more apparent, and the change was easily accounted for; within the last year he had lost two of his dearest bosom cronies. The state of the country, too, acted as a check upon the intercourse of the neighbours—the seeds of rebellion were moving throughout the land—martial law had been generally proclaimed; it extended to Ferns and its vicinity; and no being regretted its operation more fervently than Guinea Booker. His house had been the gathering-place for idlers, travellers, and story-tellers; and among these he passed many an easy, and many a merry evening: their occupation was gone—no idler dared after dusk to venture from his home; and, in the midst of his gloominess and privation, the old man began to long for the society of even his erring

and disobedient child: all he wanted was a decent opportunity for reconciliation: his pride or stubbornness would not allow him to make the first overture—and it was not likely to come soon from either of the offenders, as they had already given up all hopes of altering his rugged and unforgiving disposition.

‘This loneliness, in the mean time, preyed upon the old man’s spirits—his health was visibly impaired, and it was not in the power of medicine to effect its restoration; he moped about his garden at home, or strayed abroad through the fields in the evening—the latter he grew fond of visiting in particular. He trod slowly over all the paths that his daughter Emily had been accustomed to range in—he resorted to all her favourite resting-places—and he often fancied that, if he met her there, he could find it in his heart to clasp her to his bosom, and pronounce the words of forgiveness. In one of these evening rambles he had wandered rather to a distance from home—he had reached the fields that border upon Clone, and beheld, upon the other side of the Barm, the picturesque ruins of Ferns, and the rich green vales of Crory: he turned to a new path—crossed a broken stile—and entered a luxuriant little meadow that lay close upon the lands of his neighbour, Mr. Fortescue. He walked on through the rank high grass, and in a sheltered nook, under the bough of a broad hawthorn, he found one of his lambs resting. It was a favourite—it lay with limbs outstretched, and panting, as if tired by some recent sport or excitement: near it was an object still more remarkable;—a fine boy, apparently about four or five years old, clad in a loose tartan frock, lay stretched with his hand across the neck of the old farmer’s dumb favourite—his fine forehead and yellow locks were fanned by the evening breeze—and his left arm, which was stretched upon the grass, partly covered a bunch of newly-gathered cowslips. Old Booker gazed for a moment upon the scene that presented itself before him—it was one that was calculated to sooth and to soften him: he looked upon

the face of the child, and in a moment he recognised the son of his Emily. He had seen the boy accompanying his father to the parish chapel; he looked again—the child smiled in his sleep—some of the images that arose in his little dreams had moved him. That smile was so like his mother's—it reminded the old man of his Emily, and of what she had been in early life: the triumph of Nature was complete; he burst into tears—he stooped to raise the young slumberer from the ground; but, as he stooped, he felt a dizziness surrounding his temples; he staggered onward, and fell helplessly in the grass. A sort of fit was on him; it was a short, but yet a fatal one. His eyes grew heavy—the blood left his cheek—an indescribable turning, a nausea of the heart, came on him—he struggled for a moment—and in another moment the struggle was over—he was chill and lifeless. A neighbour, who walked that way, found him with his face to the earth; the lamb was resting under the hawthorn, and the poor boy running about screaming in utter terror and astonishment.

‘He was carried home, and the preparations for a formal wake went on; the body was regularly laid out and washed—the bed fitted up in mourning style, with black crosses at the feet and the head—a profusion of candles blazed about the room—refreshments (including pipes and tobacco) were procured for the use of the expected visitors; and, before the night was far advanced, the young and the old of the neighbouring cottages were collected around the deceased: all about the bed was silence, except when it was broken by the low tone of a select band, who joined in reciting the Litany for the Dead. In a scene of this kind the looks of all assembled are generally serious, while they are, probably, disposed to laugh at much of the ceremonies which are going forward. Emily received the account of her father's death from the person who conducted her son home: situated as she was, her feelings on the occasion may be easily imagined. There is something particularly touching in the thought of one whom we have loved dying—and dying in anger with us: we would

give worlds, if we possessed them, to be near at the moment of death, to say or to do something that might produce reconciliation: we feel on such occasions that an opportunity is lost which can never be recovered. This was Emily's first feeling, and she silently blamed herself for not having crawled to her father's feet, and clung around them until she had extorted forgiveness: she felt angry with herself for having left to the friendly interference of others that which her own duteous perseverance or filial humility might have effected. This thought, however, was now entirely useless—he was gone to another world, and her only remaining task was to go and attend to the disposal of his aged limbs. Henry had not, as yet, heard of the melancholy occurrence; he had gone on that morning to Ferns, for the purpose of making some inquiries relative to his long-lost brother, Edward. A stranger had arrived there, who had but recently escaped from France, and he thought that, by some chance, he might have seen or heard of the wanderer. In her present state of distraction and anxiety, Emily was not disposed to wait for the return of her husband. Old Mr. Fortescue offered his services; but the night was chill and damp, and she could not think of allowing him to venture abroad. She left home in the company of a female servant; she reached the dwelling of her father—the scene of all the joys and all the troubles of her infancy: the old domestics wept aloud as they opened the door to admit her—in a moment she stood beside the lifeless remains of her father; she drew back the bed-clothes—gazed for a start on his pale and care-worn features—she seized his cold hand, that was extended on the pillow—she held it and trembled. “Oh! God,” said she, “he is gone! he is gone! and his angry curse lies heavy upon me.” She fell back into the arms of an aged female who stood beside her, while all that were present felt a cold shudder creeping on them, from the tone in which she uttered her words of lamentation. At this moment an aged man, dressed in black, entered the room—it was the parish priest: he pronounced a prayer as he ap-



proached the bed—he took Emily by the hand—he slowly conducted her through the crowd—he led her to another apartment; and, after placing her under the care of two or three prudent and sensible females, to whom she had been known from her childhood, he returned to those who were gathered about the dead. The door was slowly opened, and he stood among them. A dead silence prevailed—“My friends,” said the old man, “you all know the state of things around us—you know that, even on Sunday last, from the blessed altar, I told you that there was some mischief going forward—some private plot—some plan against the government—God send that it will end well.” He paused for a moment—his breath failed him, for he was weak and sickly, and the fumes of the tobacco which flew around the place affected him—“The youngest here knows that Ferns, and the parish of Ferns, ay, and the parish of Clone, and all the parishes about us, are under martial law—every child knows its forms—every body knows that every man here, if he is not home within another hour, may be taken and sent across the seas. Now I see some of you stare at me, and others of you crossing yourselves; but you needn’t wonder at what I’m telling you, for it is the law of the land. Go home, then, and go to your beds—if any of the women, or any of the little ones, wish to stay a while longer, they may. I am only for your good. God sees

that I don’t wish to spoil your innocent merriment—I don’t wish to cross your little amusements—but remember, my children, that these are dangerous troublesome times, and we ought to be all upon our guard.” He turned to leave the room; and all there that had listened to him cried, as with one voice, “Heaven bless you, Father John!”

‘After the warning that had been given, the men were not much disposed for remaining; the advice of the priest and the dread of the law hung heavy on them: the story-tellers—the squib-makers—the players of “old dowl” and of “Turn-Spit Jack”—felt an uneasiness that cast a damp over their sport; the greater number of them gradually retired, and the place was left to the women and the children. Among the women there were four or five professed keeners; and these, in due time, were called on for their contribution of melancholy harmony, or rather of dismal discord. The things said or sung on occasions of this kind are nearly all alike; there is seldom any great difference in the words—the same praise is usually dealt out to all, if a scanty entertainment happens not to chill the ardour of the panegyrists. Old Booker’s death-song was regularly chanted; the copy of it, which I find among the papers from which this narrative is taken, is in Irish. The following is a tolerably correct translation:—

“Oh! slowly, slowly, begins our cry,  
For we are not of the fabling race,  
Who can deal out a legend, or dress up a lie,  
The name of the dead to grace.

Oh! here may our praises justly fall,  
For, let hatred say the worst it can,  
The ‘Farmer,’ taking him all in all,  
Was a hard but honest man.

He shrunk from no debt which was fairly due—  
He paused at no claim which was clearly shown;  
From no orphan’s pittance a portion he drew,  
Or added it to his own.

He freely talked as he chanced to feel,  
He never drew back from a word once said;  
He left the living with Heaven to deal,  
And he meddled not with the dead.”

"A step was heard in the passage—the latch of the door was raised—it opened, and an old man walked in; his look betrayed terror and agitation; and, before he opened his lips, it was evident that he had something of a fearful tendency to communicate. He spoke in a low but hurried tone—"Drop your keening—put the children directly to bed—turn down the candles, and rake up the fire!—let not a glimmer of light be seen—for there's murder going on around us: come to the door here, and look up to the hill—see what is doing on Curragruah." They followed him to the door—"See, the place is all in a blaze! Squire Buckey himself has been killed—and the 'Boys' are now plundering and burning his house and all about it. Look up to the rocks behind the house—see the crowds of armed men; they seem half-poised in the air—passing and repassing—some of them have muskets, but the pikemen can't be reckoned! God help us! what a frightful thing is a fire! See how it spreads about, and curls into the dark sky! Look at the crowd below—how red and wild their faces seem in that strange light! They are moving now—they have seized some poor wretch that was hiding—they drag him on. Oh! mercy! it is the old white-headed steward! Some of them owed him a grudge; and now they have him among them. Oh! God! see that brute with the pike; he has fairly fastened the old man against the tree. A flash! there's a musket gone off—some of them, in pity, have shot him—he is on the ground. But see! see! Oh, for Heaven's sake, come away! they are kicking him about like a mere football! The fire is drooping—the roof has fallen in—and who can tell how many have perished? In! in! and close the door!" cried the speaker; "I hear the tramp of cavalry—they are coming down the road." The women instantly retired—they slowly shut the door; and, on looking out through an opening, they saw a strong party of dragoons pass in full gallop down by the gate.

"Oh! but this is a dismal night," said one of the keeners; "we have death within doors and without—it

was not for nothing that I had my dreams, though my good man wouldn't hearken to them."

"A curse upon your dreams," said the old man, who stood listening; "did we want dreams or visions to tell us of what every one knew? When we saw Jem Davis locked up at midnight in his forge, making pikes—when we heard pass-words given, and knew that oaths were taken—when we saw the 'Boys' exercising after dusk upon the hill—did we want a witch to tell us what they were about? Wasn't martial law proclaimed? weren't the Orangemen threatening us? didn't the magistrates and the yeomen, and the North Cork, with their whipping and pitch caps, do all they could to drive the people into rebellion? and must we be talking about dreams and stories when the whole matter was as clear as the sun at noon?" They returned to the room where the dead rested; they sat in silence about the corpse until the morning dawned, and put an end to their watching, but not to their fears.

Emily, accompanied by the priest and a few friends, attended the remains of her father to the grave; he was buried among his relatives, in the churchyard of Clone. Henry Fortescue had not made his appearance at the funeral, nor had he returned during the night to his father's. Emily thought of Curragruah, and she trembled; she knew Henry's ardent temper, and she was aware of his intimacy with some who were known to be deep in the secrets of the "United Irishmen." She returned from the churchyard to Eder-nogue; and she sat there with her two children playing around her, anxiously expecting her husband's arrival. About sunset he made his appearance; he walked cautiously in: Emily screamed as he entered, and looked on him with doubt and terror; there was a wildness in his manner that at once realized all her fears. "Good God!" said she, "Henry, where have you been?—have you been with the murderers?"—"I have," said he, "been among the murderers!—I have been, I believe, among the damned! Oh, Emily! such a

night of horror as I have passed—not for worlds would I go through it again. They may murder me! but what of that?—get me something to eat, for I have tasted but little since I parted from you. Your father's sudden death has shocked me; I thought to have been at the funeral—but how could I venture there?" Emily wiped off her tears: she hastened to procure him some refreshment; and, as he sat, she questioned him about the horrible affair in which he had been engaged. "You remember," said he, "Kavanagh's message to me on yesterday morning—the story of the French stranger was all a mere pretence: that stranger was, indeed, a Frenchman, but he was only an agent from the United Irishmen of Dublin: unfortunately, I had meddled too much already with these matters; but the arguments of the foreigner and of Kavanagh made me go still farther. We dined together; and, after dinner, drank rather freely: the stranger left us—I remained still at the table with Kavanagh until we were both tolerably flushed: he proposed a visit to the house of a "sworn brother," near Curragrue; and, in an unlucky hour, I consented to accompany him. On arriving at the place our friend was not to be seen, but we were directed to seek him in a grove that spreads at the bottom of the hill: there we found him, in the centre of his armed associates; he was surrounded by nearly a hundred men, all provided with pikes or muskets: a sword and a case of pistols were handed to me.—I paused; but Kavanagh whispered "that there was no back-door;" meaning, of course, that I had no choice. I consequently received them, although, at the moment, my mind misgave me. Kavanagh then addressed the crowd—"My friends," said he, "I believe we are all here good men and true: we are all willing to fight for our religion and liberty—we are all ready for work—but what can the best workman do without tools? We want fire-arms—there are lots of them in Squire Buckey's above there, if we could only get at them—shall we try to have them?" He looked around for a moment—"We will then go and demand them: if they are given quietly

no one shall be hurt; if they resist us, let them take what they get—Buckey is my cousin, but I don't care for that."

It was now dark—a scout arrived almost out of breath, and brought word that Buckey, so far from waiting to have his arms taken, had actually set out with a party of his yeomen cavalry, to seek for us in our gathering-place. The neigh or the tramp of horses was heard at a distance—the enemy approached. Kavanagh coolly ordered his men to stand to their arms; the place in which we stood was a thick grove, situated in a hollow where the road was dark and narrow. On the roadside we planted ourselves, sheltered from danger by a high ditch and a thick hedge: near an opening in this hedge stood Kavanagh with a case of pistols beside him, and a blunderbuss in his right hand. I looked at him, and I must own that at the moment I admired his calm and determined manner. The cavalry came nearer—we could distinctly hear their conversation—"It was about this grove," said one, "that we saw them last week." "No," replied another, "it was lower down, near the little stream." At this moment we were all waiting in silent anxiety: we could plainly notice each other's breathing—we whispered not, but did all by signs: an awkward fellow let his pike fall, and the sound at once discovered our hiding-place. "Here, here!" said Buckey, turning his horse to the ditch, "boys, follow me." He dashed at the opening already mentioned—stood upon the gap—and Kavanagh was before him. "Cousin Buckey, I am waiting for you," cried he; and, with the word, sent the contents of the blunderbuss through the body of his unfortunate kinsman. This was the signal—all our gunsmen discharged their pieces—every shot told—and in five minutes more than a dozen of the wretched yeomanry lay lifeless in the road: the rest retreated for life; and, as we had no means of overtaking them, we allowed them to run.

"After this the men insisted on being led to the squire's dwelling-house, to get some refreshment; they swore that their object was not plun-



der. Kavanagh could not refuse; and I was obliged unwillingly to accompany them—but I can hardly bear even to think of what occurred there: most of the domestics had friends among our party—they were allowed to escape, and to take under their care two ladies, who unfortunately had remained in the house. The old steward had made himself unpopular by some turns of unnecessary severity, and for him there was no hope; he cried like a child—he laid hold on Kavanagh, who shook him off—he then clung to me—I thought to save him; but, in trying to do so, I endangered my own life. As to the burning, and what followed, I cannot talk of it—you must have heard and seen it.” “Oh, Heavens!” said Emily, “it is horrible—but tell me, Henry, are you not in danger if you are seen?”—“Show me some place,” said he, “where I can safely rest; for I am scarce able, at the present moment, to raise my head. I’ll sleep, and to-morrow may settle all.” She conducted him to a little room at the upper end of the house—it was a favourite place of her’s, for she and Henry had often sat there at an earlier period, and talked of a thousand things interesting only to lovers. She sighed as they entered it now. She urged him to undress for the night: this he refused—he lay down upon the bed in his clothes, and, before she quitted the room, was apparently sunk in a sound slumber.

She returned to the lower room, and was sitting there with her little girl beside her, when her eldest child, young Edward, ran in almost breathless—“Mother, mother!” said he, “here are some strangers coming—they have red beards upon their lips, and long swords hanging by their sides.” As he spoke they made their appearance: the party consisted of an officer and three privates belonging to one of the German regiments then stationed in the neighbourhood. These soldiers did not appear to be foreigners—they spoke English fluently enough, and had nothing about them that looked outlandish except their mustachios. The officer bowed as he entered, and civilly requested something in the way of a drink for himself and his men—he said they had

walked a good way, and were rather fatigued. Emily readily procured the drink; and, as she had some cold meat remaining from the festivities of the wake, she pressed them to take what they called a lunch; over this they regaled themselves for some time, till the officer gave the word to move. He arose; and, after wishing his fair hostess a good evening, he and his attendants set out on their way for Ferns.

“In about a quarter of an hour, to Emily’s surprise, the officer again entered the place—“You will probably be surprised,” said he, “at my return—but, damn it, your good drink has made those dragoons tipsy, and I don’t like to be seen along with them—I have given them the slip, and will go home to Ferns by another road—or probably you could procure me a bed for the night.”—As he spoke he cautiously fastened the door. Emily took no particular notice of this, for she heard the dragoons talking outside, and their conversation was far from being agreeable. “Curse it,” said one, “where did the lieutenant turn? Could he have gone again into this blasted old farm-house.” “Damn that house!” said another, “they are a Popish set in it—didn’t you see the old Popish prayer-book lying upon the table?—we ought to hang them or blow them all up.” They were now close under the eave of the house; they spoke for a few minutes in a lowered tone, and then went away laughing. “They are gone,” said the officer, “and I am glad of the riddance; I find it a hard matter to keep the scoundrels in order, particularly in a lawless time like this—wherever they go they are bent on killing the men and kissing the women; to the latter they show no mercy. But have you inquired about the bed? for the night is now coming on, and the walk to Ferns is lonely and tedious.”

“I shall try what can be done,” replied Emily, in a tone that was hardly audible. “And if you can bespeak a pretty bed-fellow for me, I shall take it as a favour—What think you,” continued the soldier, “of taking care of me yourself?” Emily reddened and trembled—“Nay,

"nay!" said the other, "you have been married, I see; but you are yet young and handsome—your husband is probably away with the rebels, and you must feel lonely." He followed her to the end of the room, and laid hold of her hand—"You are the image of a girl that I once loved—for her sake, at least, I must kiss you." She turned from him; he was proceeding to violence, and she screamed. Henry was awakened by the cry—he sprung from the bed—seized a knife that lay upon the table, and rushed down from the room: he beheld his Emily in the grasp of a stranger—he paused not for a moment, but at once plunged the weapon into the bosom of the offender: the blood gushed out around him—the stranger staggered and fell back upon a sofa that stood in a corner of the room: he spoke not, but leant still backward, and turned up his face to the light. Henry looked upon him for a moment—he started—and the bloody knife fell from his hand—"Holy Powers!" said he, "is this my brother?—is this Edward that I have murdered? Oh, Emily! Emily!"—he looked around, but she had fainted off.

"My name," said the dying man, "is Fortescue; bear me, for God's sake, into the air, for the smoke here

is horrible."—Good Heavens!" cried Henry, "what am I to do? the house is all in flames." He rushed towards the door—it was double-locked, and the key had been flung aside; this was probably from mere chance. Henry stood for a moment in absolute distraction: the place around him was thick with smoke—the rafters were crackling over his head—his brother was bleeding to death—his Emily was, to all appearance, dead; his children were screaming around her; and he saw no hope of relief. He turned again to the door—it was immovable: he seized a piece of iron that chance threw in his way—he applied it to the lock, and, with an effort that appeared almost miraculous, forced back the bolt. The door flew open; he was nearly suffocated; he stood to breathe upon the threshold—he turned round—and at that moment the burning roof fell in! All was lost! his brother—his wife—and his little ones, were but a heap of ashes! He fled from the spot: he met an old neighbour on the road near Ferns—told him of his ruin—and from that hour was never again heard of.

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Such was the fate that awaited the children of Fortescue.

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#### THE HISTORY OF CHIVALRY, OR KNIGHTHOOD AND ITS TIMES.\*

THE feeling of interest for all subjects relating to chivalry, which Warton and Percy were the first to awaken in the English public, has been excited to perhaps the highest possible degree by the works of Sir Walter Scott, in poetry as well as in prose. That chivalry which is the brightest and the best feature in the history of the middle ages, and which was the parent and source of all those high exploits and heroic courtesies that place those times in competition with the fairest pages of ancient history, has hitherto had no historian. Memorials relating to it are plentifully scattered throughout certain manuscripts and ancient books, known only to the book-worms, and their human brethren, the antiquaries; but never until the publication of Mr.

Mills' excellent history has the subject been placed before the public in that succinct form which is necessary to its being relished by them. The *Memoires* by Froissart, which, as has been truly said, more persons talk of than read, contain some of the most valuable particulars respecting those bright days of chivalry in which he lived; but, although Colonel Johnes's translation has made Froissart accessible to all English readers, the bulk of the work forbids their entering upon it. Similar objections apply to almost every other source of information; and the good reading public of Great Britain have been obliged to go blundering on through such of the Scottish novels as are chivalric, guessing at most of the allusions, and of course mistaking

\* The History of Chivalry, or Knighthood and its Times. By Charles Mills, Esq. Longman. 1825.



nearly all of them. In the work before us Mr. Mills has obviated all these difficulties, and in two volumes of moderate dimensions, written in an easy and agreeable manner, he has comprised all that is most worthy of being known respecting chivalry in Europe. He has had the good fortune to produce a work which, for authenticity, diligence of research, and critical skill, deserves a place in the book-cases of the most profound antiquaries; while it is so light and playful that it will also be in great request at the circulating libraries.

It would be impossible for us, within the limits by which we are necessarily circumscribed, to give a satisfactory analysis of a work so comprehensive as that before us. The author has adopted the judicious plan of tracing the history of chivalry from its earliest origin in the northern nations of Europe. He has detailed, in a very interesting manner, all the particulars of a knight's education, the services he had to perform before he was thought fit to assume the character of a complete knight, his arms, and the exercises in which he usually employed his prowess. The tournaments and martial sports of the middle ages are not forgotten, the different orders of knighthood are incidentally explained; and that most important subject, the influence of the fair sex on the conduct of the knights, is amply discussed. Having thus disposed of the general points of his work, he treats of the state of chivalry, from its origin to the reign of James I. when it slept for ever. The progress of chivalry in France, Spain, Germany, and Italy, is traced with learning and taste, and the work is concluded by an eloquent chapter on the merits and effects of chivalry.

It will be more just, after having thus explained this subject, rather than described the work, to give some extracts from the history of chivalry, which may afford our readers a specimen of the manner in which the task has been executed. Among the heroes whom Mr. Mills particularly mentions in the history of English chivalry (and which we select as the more familiar and interesting), Sir Walter Manny occupies a foremost place:—

'In the suite of Philippa, daughter of the Count of Hainault, when in the year 1327 she came to England to be married to Edward III., was a gentleman of baronial rank, named Walter of Manny; and it was not thought that he lost any quality of his birth by serving at her table as her carver. He had been educated as a cavalier, and his military accomplishments were soon noticed by Edward. He was knighted, and the ceremony was splendid, the dresses being selected from the royal wardrobe. When the chance of a war with France was freely talked of in London, and every man's mind was filled with hopes of honour, Sir Walter vowed before dames and lords of the court, that he would be the first knight to enter the enemy's territory, and win either town or castle, and do some deeds of arms. He then went to Flanders, and on the defiances being declared between the French and English nations, he got together about forty spears, and, by riding through Brabant night and day, he soon reached Hainault. Mortaigne was, he heard, in the realm of France; and passing with the utmost speed through the wood of Blaton, he arrived at the wished-for town before the sun arose, and by good chance he found the wicket of the gate open. Leaving a few of his company to keep the entrance, he went into the high street with his pennon before him, and reached the castle. He was then espied by the watch, who blew his horn, and shouted "Treason, treason!" It would have been the extreme of rashness for such a little troop as that of Sir Walter to have attempted to storm the castle. They therefore contented themselves with setting fire to some houses, and then quitted the town; and thus that noble and gentle knight Sir Walter Manny performed the vow which he had made to the dames and lords of England.'

The devotion to the fair sex, which formed so conspicuous a feature in every knight's character, is forcibly described by the author:

'A soldier of chivalry would go to battle, proud of the title, pursuivant of love, and in the contests of chivalric skill, which, like the battles of Homer's heroes, gave brilliancy and splendour to war, a knight challenged another to joust with a lance for love of the ladies; and he commended himself to the mistress of his heart for protection and assistance. In his mind woman was a being of mystic power; in the forests of Germany her voice had been listened to like that of the spirit of the woods, melodious, solemn, and oracular; and when chivalry was formed into a system,



the same idea of something supernaturally powerful in her character threw a shadowy and serious interest over softer feelings, and she was revered as well as loved. While this devotedness of soul to woman's charms appeared in his general intercourse with the sex, in a demeanor of homage, in a grave and stately politeness, his lady-love he regarded with religious constancy. Fickleness would have been a species of impiety, for she was not a toy that he played with, but a divinity whom he worshipped. This adoration of her sustained him through all the perils that lay before his reaching his heart's desire; and loyalty (a word that has lost its pristine and noble meaning) was the choicest quality in the character of the *preux chevalier*.

'It was supported, too, by the state of the world he lived in. He fought the battles of his country and his church, and he travelled to foreign lands as a pilgrim, or a crusader, for such were the calls of his chivalry. To be the first in the charge and the last in the retreat was the counsel which one knight gave to another, on being asked the surest means of winning a lady fair. Love was the crowning grace, the guerdon of his toils, and its gentle influence aided him in discharging the duties of his gallant and solemn profession. The Lady Isabella, daughter of the Earl of Juliers, loved the Lord Eustace Dambercourt for the great nobleness of arms that she had heard reported of him; and her messengers often carried to him letters of love, whereby her noble paramour was the more hardy in his deeds of arms.'

Sir Walter was not behind the other heroes of his age in this feeling:

'Afterwards, (in the year 1342,) being high in favour with Edward, he was sent into Britany, with a proud display of knights and archers, to aid the Countess of Mountfort, at that time besieged in her castle by the French. He was not long before he made a sally on the enemy, and with such effect, that he destroyed all their great engines of assault. The French knights, not anticipating so bold a measure, lay at some distance from their machines; but they soon advanced in formidable numbers. The English and Bretons retreated, however, fairly and easily, though the French pursued them with infuriate violence. It would not have been knightly for Sir Walter to have left the field without having right valiantly acquitted himself: and he exclaimed, "Let me never be beloved by my lady, unless I have a course with one of these followers." He then set his spear in its rest, and so did many of his companions. They ran at the first comers. Then legs were seen

turned upwards, knights were taken and rescued, and many rare deeds of arms were done by both parties. Afterwards the English slowly retired to the castle and the French to their tents.'

There was in this as in the following exploit a degree of rashness which nothing but his success could excuse. If a disastrous result had ensued, the censures on his headstrong valour (still unquestionably valour) would have been as loud as the praises which he received:

'No circumstance in this war was of more importance than the relief of the castle of Auberoche, then beleaguered by the French. The Earl of Derby had with him only three hundred spears, and six hundred archers, the rest of his force being dispersed over the country. The French could count about ten or twelve thousand; but the English, undismayed by numbers, thought it was a great disgrace to abandon their friends in Auberoche. The Earl of Derby and his knights were then in a wood, two little leagues from Auberoche; and while waiting for the Earl of Pembroke, they left their horses to pasture.

'While they were loitering in the fields, in this state of restlessness, Sir Walter Manny said to his companions, "Let us leap on our horses, and wend our way under the covert of this wood till we arrive at the side which joins the Frenchmen's host; and then let us put our spurs into our horses, and cry our cries. Our enemy will then be at supper, and, not expecting us, you shall see them so discomfited, that they shall not be able to preserve any array." A scheme so adventurous was readily embraced: every man mounted his horse; and the troop coasted the wood till they came near the French, who were going to supper, and some, indeed, were already seated at the tables. The scene of festivity was broken up when the English displayed their banners and pennons, and dashed their spurs into their horses, and raising the cry, "A Derby, a Derby!" rushed among them, overthrowing tents and pavilions. When the French recovered from their astonishment, they mounted their steeds, and rode into the field in military array; but there they found the English archers ready to receive them, and those bold yeomen shot so fiercely that they slew many men and horses. On the other side of the castle there was a noble display of French chivalry; and the Englishmen, having overcome those who were near the tents, dashed boldly among them. Many noble deeds of arms were done, knights were

taken and rescued, and the English cause triumphed: for the knights of the castle had armed themselves, and now issued forth, and rushed into the thickest of the press. Then the Englishmen entered into Auberoche; and the Earl of Derby gave a supper to the earls and viscounts who were prisoners, and to many of the knights and squires, lauding God, at the same time, that a thousand of his own nation had overcome many thousands of their enemies, and had rescued the town of Auberoche, and saved their companions that were within, who, in all likelihood, would have been taken within two days.'

In peace or in war Sir Walter Manny was always distinguished for his noble and manly character. Courteous to his foes, charitable to the poor, pious and gentle, he closed a life of honour at an advanced age, and bore with him to the grave the esteem and regret of all his coteremporaries.

Sir John Chandos cuts also a conspicuous figure in the same part of the work. He had been treated uncivilly by the Earl of Pembroke, also a gallant knight, but who was induced to refuse his aid when Sir John had need of it. Very soon afterwards the earl, being in great stress, was obliged to send to Sir John for succour. The manner in which this request was first refused, and afterwards granted, is so characteristic of the persons and the times to which it relates, that we give it entire :

'The Frenchmen, thinking it a more easy chevisance to discomfit him than Sir John Chandos, assembled seven hundred soldiers from all the garrisons in the country, and Sir Louis of Sancerre took the command. The Earl of Pembroke heard nothing of the enemy, and, not having the vigilance of Sir John Chandos, he took no pains to inquire. The English were one day reposing in a village called Puirenou, in the territory of Poitou, when suddenly the Frenchmen came into the town, their spears in their rests, crying their cry, "Our Lady of Sancerre, for the Marshal of France." The English were dressing their horses, and preparing their suppers, when they were thus unexpectedly assailed. Several were killed, all the plunder was retaken, many prisoners were made, and the Earl of Pembroke and some of his knights and archers saved themselves in a preceptory of the Templars. The Frenchmen assaulted it gallantly, and it was as gallantly defended, till night put an end to the assault.

'The English were so severely straitened for provisions, that they knew they must speedily surrender, unless Chandos came to their succour. A squire, who professed to know the country, offered to go to Sir John, and he accordingly left the fortress when the French had retired to rest. But he soon lost his road, and did not recover it till morning.

'At day-break the French renewed their assaults, and mounted the walls with pavises to defend their heads from the missiles of the English. The Earl of Pembroke and his little band fought so bravely, from morning until noon, that the French were obliged to desist, and to resort to the uncavalierlike mode of worsting their gallant foes by sending to the neighbouring villages for pikes and mattocks, that they might undermine and break down the wall.

'Then the Earl of Pembroke called a squire to him, and said, "Friend, take my courser, and issue out at the back postern, and ride straight to Poitiers, and show Sir John Chandos the state and danger we are in; and recommend me to him by this token," added the Earl, taking a ring from his finger: "deliver it to him, for Sir John knows it well."

'The squire took the ring, and, immediately mounting his courser, fled through the postern, thinking he should achieve great honour if he could reach Sir John Chandos.

'The first squire, having lost so much time in the confusion of the night, did not arrive at Poitiers till nine in the morning. He found Sir John at mass; and, in consequence of the importance of his message, he disturbed his devotions.

'Chandos's feelings had been severely offended by the pride and presumption of the Earl of Pembroke, and he was in no great haste to relieve him. He heard the mass out. The tables were then arranged for the noon repast.

'The servants, among whom the message of the squire had been bruited, inquired of Sir John if he would go to dinner. He replied, "Yes; if it were ready."

'He went into the hall, and knights and squires brought him water. While he was washing, the second squire from the Earl of Pembroke, pale, weary, and travel-soiled, entered the hall, and knelt before him, and took the ring out of his purse, and said, "Right dear Sir, the Earl of Pembroke recommends himself to you by this token, and heartily desires your assistance in relieving him from his present danger at Puirenou."

'Chandos took the ring; but instead of calling his friends to arm, he coldly observed, that it would be difficult to assist



to the earl if the affair were such as the squire had represented it. "Let us go to dinner," said he; and accordingly the knights sat down.

The first course was eaten in silence, for Chandos was thoughtful, and the minds of his friends were not idle.

In the middle of the second course, when the generous wine of France had roused his better nature, he started from a reverie, and with a smile of pride and generousness exclaimed, "Sirs, the Earl of Pembroke is a noble man, and of great lineage: he is son of my natural lord the King of England, for he hath married his daughter, and in every thing he is companion to the Earl of Cambridge. He hath required me to come to him, and I ought to consent to his desire."

Then thrusting the table from him, and rising to the full height of his fine martial figure, he cried, "Gallant knights, I will ride to Puirenon."

This noble and generous resolve found an echo in the heart of every one that was present. The trumpets sounded, the knights hastily donned their armour, and saddled the first horses they could meet with; and in a few moments the courtyard glittered with more than two hundred spears. They rode apace towards Puirenon; but news of their approach reached the vigilant French in sufficient time for them to abandon the siege, and effect their retreat with their prisoners and booty.

We should gladly follow Mr. Mills in his progress, and give the portraits he draws of other not less valiant knights than those whom we have introduced to our readers. The noble Bertrand du Guesclin, the celebrated Ruz Diaz, the Cid, Bayard, and other knights of renown, find a place in his interesting memoirs. All these, however, we are compelled to leave; but we cannot do so without a strong recommendation to our readers to secure to themselves the pleasure they must derive from the perusal of a book which is at once as useful as a history and as amusing as a romance. With one more extract on the origin of *blue stockings*, we close our notice of the 'History of Chivalry.'

Many of the orders whose histories fill the pages of works on knighthood have no claims to their places; for they were only associations of cavaliers without royal or pontifical authority, and wearing no badge or cross, except in the imagination of the writer. Only one of these fraternities merits mention here. The Society de la Calza (of the Stocking) was formed at Venice in the year 1400, to the honour of the inauguration of the Doge, Michele Steno. The employments of the members were conversation and festivity; and so splendid were the entertainments of music and dancing, that the gay spirits of other parts of Italy anxiously solicited the honour of seats in the society. All their statutes regarded only the ceremonies of the ball or the theatre; and the members being resolved on their rigorous performance, took an oath in a church to that tendency. They had banners and a seal like an authorized order of knighthood. Their dress was as splendid and elegant as Venetian luxury and taste could fashion it; and, consistently with the singular custom of the Italians of marking academies and other intellectual associations by some external signs of folly, the members, when they met in literary discussion, were distinguished by the colours of their stockings. The colours were sometimes fantastically blended, and at other times one colour, particularly the *blue*, prevailed. The Society de la Calza lasted till the year 1590, when the foppery of Italian literature took some other symbol. The rejected title then crossed the Alps, and found a congenial soil in the flippancy and literary triflings of Parisian society, and particularly branded female pedantry as the strongest feature in the character of French pretension. It diverged from France to England, and for a while marked the vanity of the small advances in literature of our female coteries. But the propriety of its application is now gradually ceasing; for we see in every circle that attainments in literature can be accomplished with no loss of womanly modesty. It is in this country, above all others, that Knowledge asserts her right of general dominion, or contends that, if she be the sustaining energy of one sex, she forms the lighter charm, the graceful drape, of the other.



## ROBERT EMMET AND HIS COTEMPORARIES.—NO. VII.

*Preparations for Rebellion.—The Revolt.—The Discomfiture.*

I now took up my residence in Dublin, where I was in the constant habit of meeting my friend Emmet, and his associates. With the exception of Captain Russell, these were remarkable neither for rank nor talents; but most of them appeared uncommonly zealous in the cause; and such of them as were delegates to the distant provinces drew the most encouraging picture of national discontent. They represented the peasantry as every where ripe for revolt; and named several persons of consequence who only waited for an opportunity of declaring for a republican form of government. Emmet seemed confident of success; and, in the anticipation of triumph, we spent several nights discussing the best method of securing independence after the overthrow of government. Our plan of operation being already before the public,\* it is quite unnecessary to state it here. It must be admitted that in drawing it up Emmet displayed consummate skill; and, had his means being equal to his design, the consequence would have been deeply serious: the metropolis would, in all likelihood, have fallen into our hands; and such an event must have had an alarming effect on the whole kingdom.

Fortunately there was failure in every part of our plan. A day was appointed for a general rising, but when that day arrived we were still unprepared: there were neither arms nor ammunition; subordinate officers misunderstood their instructions; and several countrymen, who had come in to join us, returned home on being erroneously told that the day was postponed. Gladly would Emmet have deferred the time of rising—but he had discovered all these mistakes at an hour too late for him to send informations to distant counties, which he understood were to raise the standard of insurrection on the night of the 23d of July; and, as he all along placed success on the event of simultaneous movements, he would not consent to endanger others with-

out making an attempt himself on the metropolis.

On the night of the 22d, we assembled at the depot; and, though every thing wore a most gloomy aspect, we resolved to persevere. The different leaders received their instructions:—some were to assemble their forces in the Barley Fields, now Mountjoy Square; some on the Coal Quay; and others in different parts of the town. These were to act only in case of seeing a third rocket, which Emmet was to send up when he considered the time arrived for the commencement of hostilities. Emmet, Malachy, Bryan, and I, were to head the forces which were to attack the Castle.

Every thing being thus arranged, I bid my companions farewell for the night, and returned to my lodgings. I could sleep but little; and, when I awoke the next morning, the consciousness of being on the eve of a great event filled my mind with gloomy apprehensions. To reflect, however, was now useless; and, without giving my thoughts time to inform against my purpose, I hurried to the depot, where I found all in confusion. The place was thronged with insurgents who had arrived from the country, and whose presence served to obstruct the workmen. Malachy and Emmet, with astonishing firmness, gave directions; and I was handed the printed proclamation to read.

As I looked upon the expressive countenances of the desperate and infatuated men around me, I could not resist the gloomy prescience which the scene was calculated to impart. It was a moment I would not wish to go through again; there was so much of foreboding evil—so much of personal misfortune to apprehend—and so much toil and peril which must be endured, whether the rebellion triumphed or was crushed. My imagination, like a prism, collected all the rays of evil from probable discomfiture, and showed me, in aggravated horror, all the dangers I had to encounter. However, to recede was

\* See Appendix to Curran's Life, by his Son.

now impossible, without incurring the imputation of cowardice; or, what was more intolerable, the suspicion of my associates. Actual hostility was preferable to either of these; and, making a virtue of necessity, I recalled the memory of those conspirators who had been successful, and fortified my resolution by anticipating the same fortune, though every thing around might have taught a rational man the extravagant folly of hoping to subvert a powerful government with a few hundred men, partially armed. These, it is true, we thought had only to raise the standard of rebellion, and thousands were ready to support it; but, in future, who will rely upon the promises of conspirators?

About six o'clock, Emmet, Malachy, one or two others, and myself, put on our green uniform, trimmed with gold lace, and selected our arms. The insurgents, who had all day been well plied with whiskey, began to prepare for commencing an attack upon the Castle; and, when all was ready, Emmet made an animated address to the conspirators. At eight o'clock precisely we sallied out of the depot; and, when we arrived in Thomas Street, the insurgents gave three deafening cheers.

The consternation excited by our presence defies description. Every avenue emptied its curious hundreds, and almost every window exhibited half a dozen inquisitive heads, while peaceable shopkeepers ran to their doors, and beheld with amazement a lawless band of armed insurgents, in the midst of a peaceable city, an hour at least before dark. The scene at first might have appeared amusing to a careless spectator, from the singular and dubious character which the riot wore; but when the rocket ascended, and burst over the heads of the people, the aspect of things underwent an immediate and wonderful change. The impulse of the moment was self-preservation; and those who, a few minutes before, seemed to look on with vacant wonder, now assumed a face of horror, and fled with precipitation. The wish to escape was simultaneous; and the eagerness with which the people retreated from before us

impeded their flight, as they crowded upon one another in the entrance of alleys, court-ways, and lanes; while the screams of women and children were frightful and heart-rending.

'To the Castle!' cried our enthusiastic leader, drawing his sword, and his followers appeared to obey; but when we reached the Market-house our adherents had wonderfully diminished, there being not more than twenty insurgents with us.

'Fire the rocket!' cried Malachy.

'Hold awhile,' said Emmet, snatching the match from the man's hand who was about applying it. 'Let no lives be unnecessarily lost. Run back and see what detains the men.'

Malachy obeyed; and we remained near the Market-house, waiting the arrival of our party, until the soldiers approached.

'Our cause is lost!' exclaimed Emmet, snatching the rockets from the man's hand who carried them, and, trampling them under his feet, he continued, "Let our friends at a distance escape—comrades, provide for your own safety."

A skirmish now ensued, and we succeeded in forcing our way into Francis Street, but had not proceeded far before we saw another party of soldiers advancing against us from the Coombe.

'This way, sir!' cried a voice I had heard before, and Denis Howlan seized my arms, and pulled me into a street\* resembling Monmouth Street in London, being full of old clothes' shops. About a dozen doors down we turned into a shop, Denis asking, as we entered, 'Friend or foe?' 'Friend!' cried an old man, hurrying us into a back parlour, and then up stairs. 'The roof—the roof,' he whispered; and accordingly we made our exit through a dormant window. In the gutter, between the houses, we found three men, who had sought that place of safety; and, having also danger to apprehend, we took, like them, a recumbent posture.

Throughout the night our ears were assailed with noises like those of a town suddenly attacked—bells ringing, drums beating, and all the clamour of war—while an occasional shot announced that our danger was

\* Plunkett Street.



not yet over. My companions sent up incessant prayers for the safety of their enthusiastic leader; and, as I loved the man, I heartily joined in their obtestations.

Towards morning the indications of alarm began to subside; but it was full twelve o'clock before our friend, the old clothes' man, made his appearance. We departed cautiously one by one; and, when I descended from my aerial abode, a suit of common clothes were handed to me; and, by directions of Denis, I made an exchange with the tailor, at the same time rewarding him for the shelter he had afforded.

It was now agreed that I should accompany Denis to his house in the country until the storm should blow over; and, as the sooner we left Dublin the better, we set off by different routes appointing Portobello as a place of meeting.

Not being so well acquainted as Denis with the city, I took the most direct way, by Kevin's Port; and, going up Camden Street, I was startled at seeing a party of soldiers approaching me. Conscious guilt deprived me of all presence of mind; and, as the impulse of the moment was concealment, I turned into the door of a private house, which opportunely stood open, and rushed into the parlour. There was no one present but ladies; and, before I could attempt an apology, my eyes encountered those of Miss J—. She screamed on seeing me in my concealed dress; but the loud knocking at the street-door allowed of no explanation. 'A fugitive rebel,' said I to the mistress of the house; 'can you shelter me?' 'For God's sake, Mrs. C—, do,' said Eliza, her face the picture of apprehension. One of the young ladies now seized my hand, and hurried me, followed by Eliza, through the back yard, that led into a stable-lane. 'To Elmgrove!' whispered Eliza. 'To the cottage of Howlan,' I replied, as the door was closed behind me.

I readily made my way to Portobello, where I met my friend Denis. 'I thought,' said he, as I came up, 'that you were nabbed, like Master Malachy.'

'Malachy a prisoner!' said I.

'Ay, in troth,' answered Denis; 'he

was ketched this morning, I hear, in a disguised dress, and his brother Bryan was killed last night in Thomas Street; but come along, or we'll be nabbed too.'

One difficulty was no sooner surmounted than we had to encounter another. The roads near the metropolis were covered with patrols, and to pass these unobserved was no easy matter. Denis, who was familiar with hair-breadth escapes, appeared indifferent to his own situation, and seemed to feel only for mine. He reconnoitred the Philistines, as he called the soldiers and police, and avoided, with consummate skill, any contact with them. A lane, or cross road, or hedge, served his purpose of concealment until the party had passed; and, when we had got clear of the suburbs, he led me through the most intricate paths and by-ways, over ditches, rocks, and rivers, until we gained the Wicklow mountains. Here another difficulty arose. The people, alarmed for the safety of their friends, who had not yet returned from Dublin, were collected in groups, anxiously inquiring from all who passed the fortune of the preceding evening; while individuals endeavoured to obtain information respecting sons, brothers, and husbands. Fearful that the discord between my dress and accent might create suspicion, I communicated my apprehensions to Denis, who was not long in deciding what should be done. Turning from the main road, he conducted me across a heathy hill into a most sequestered glen, where every thing around assured us of personal safety; and here we resolved to stop until darkness enabled us to approach, unobserved, the cottage of my friend.

Wearied with apprehension, as well as with the exertions of the morning, I gladly threw myself upon a green bank, beneath a lofty beech; and Denis took his place at a short distance from me. The address, coolness, and philosophy, displayed by this untutored peasant, excited my wonder; and, on my inquiring whether our case was not desperate, he laughed in my face, and assured me that there was no danger whatever. 'Even if it went to that,' he continued, 'we could join Captain Dwyer.'



Denis then went largely into the romantic history of this chief of a mountain banditti, and amused me with many curious anecdotes connected with himself. The lower order of the Irish have a certain *naiveté* and drollery in telling a story which impart an interest to their discourse that takes an immediate hold of your attention; and you know not whether to laugh most at the ludicrous incidents of the narrative, or the perpetual bulls of the narrator. Racked as my mind was by self-reproach and apprehensions, I could not resist the risible conversation of my companion; and, on the approach of night, I found myself more inclined to hope that, though then surrounded with danger, all might yet terminate happily.

When the night had fallen we arose from our simple couch, and proceeded, in a direct line, for the cottage of Denis. We had just gained the ascent of a lofty hill, when a shrill whistle, apparently not far distant, brought us to a full stop; and, in an instant, a dozen men started up, as if by some magical agency, from the heath around us. 'Your name and business?' demanded a gloomy-looking figure who stood before us, wrapped up in a great cloak.

'Our names and business?' repeated Denis: 'maybe we've neather; what would you have then?'

'Your life!' replied our interrogator, approaching us with a pistol in each hand. 'Hold!' exclaimed a man rushing between us, 'these are friends. You *spalpeen*, don't you know Denis Howlan?'

'Faith, Captain Dwyer,' said my companion, with the utmost *sang froid*, 'it just is Denis Howlan himself, and this is a real friend of Giniral Emmet, though it is not himself that's in it, as he hasn't got on his own clothes.'

'No matter for that,' replied Dwyer, 'hasten to the glen. The council are meeting, and I am here to prevent intruders—pass on—good night—*Babes*,\* to your cover.'

In the glen, as the outlaw had informed us, we found several persons assembled; and, when my name was

announced, one of them advanced from a circle formed round him, and seized my hand;—it was the unfortunate enthusiast, Robert Emmet. His manner was most kind and affectionate; and he congratulated me, with every demonstration of sincerity, on my escape from the slaughter of the preceding evening. He lamented the fate of Malachy and Bryan, and seemed deeply affected at the discomfiture of his scheme.

I soon learned that my friend, with some others, had escaped to these hills on Saturday night, in time to prevent a contemplated rising of the insurgents; and had met, this evening, the leaders in the conspiracy, to consult on plans of future operation. Most of them recommended vigorous measures; and strenuously advised an immediate attack on Wicklow, Arklow, &c. stating that all the kingdom was ripe for revolt. The time had passed for Emmet to credit such sweeping assertions; and, though he did not contradict his friends, he unhesitatingly condemned the having any further recourse to hostilities. 'For,' said he, 'defeated in our first grand attempt, all further endeavours must be futile. Our enemies are armed; our friends are dispirited; and our only hope is now in patience. The justice of our cause must one day triumph; and let us not indiscreetly protract the period by any premature endeavours to accelerate it. No doubt I could, in forty-eight hours, wrap the whole kingdom in the flames of rebellion; but, as I have no ambition beyond the good of my country, I best study her interest, and the interest of freedom, by declining to elevate my name upon the ruin of thousands, and afford our tyrants an apology to draw another chain around unhappy Ireland. In revolts, the first blow decides the contest: we have aimed one; and, missing the mark, let us retire unobserved, and leave the enemy ignorant of the hand which was raised for their destruction. Impenetrable secrecy surrounds all our measures: the loss we have sustained is inconsiderable; and, unacquainted with their own danger, and the extent of our re-

\* The rebel outlaws, who took up their abodes in the mountains and fastnesses of Wexford and Wicklow, after 1798, ludicrously called themselves '*The babes of the wood*.'

sources, the tyrants of Ireland will relapse into false security, and afford us, perhaps, sooner than we imagine, another opportunity to attack the hydra of oppression. Let me, therefore, my friends, advise you to act with that prudence which becomes men engaged in the grandest of all causes—the liberation of their country. Be cautious, be silent; and do not afford our enemies any ground for either tyranny or suspicion; but, above all, never forget that you are *United Irishmen*—sworn to promote the liberty of your country by all the means in your power.

‘I have now relieved my bosom from a load of apprehension; and, in preventing the revolt of last night from assuming the form of rebellion, I am conscious of having saved the lives of thousands of my fellow-countrymen. When the libeller of my name and intentions shall charge the blood of yesterday to my memory, I hope there will not be wanting some one to recollect that, if a little has been shed through my means, I have prevented the effusion of one hundred times as much, on which I might have floated to a disreputable notoriety.

‘Over my future destiny Fate has thrown a veil which mortal eyes cannot penetrate. Should I succeed in evading the pursuit of my enemies, you may expect to see me once more armed in the cause of Ireland; but, should I fall on the scaffold, let not the coward or the knave intimidate you from again and again appealing to Heaven in behalf of your rights and liberties by alluding to my recent failure. Oh! I beseech you, as friends and fellow-patriots, to believe me, and, in the name of our common country, I charge you to transmit it to your children, that, had I only one thousand pounds more, and another thousand men, I had overthrown the temple of despotism, and given liberty to Ireland. My plan was an admirable one: but there was failure in every part; and from these defects let future patriots learn to prevent similar consequences. Our attempt will not be unproductive of good; the government will learn from it that they will never be secure while there is an *Emmet* in existence; and the conspirator will see that tens of

thousands may know his secret without even one being found capable of betraying it. Gentlemen, you will now look to your own safety; and, as for me, I shall do the best I can to quit the country, in the hope of again meeting you under happier auspices.’

He spoke in a subdued and feeling tone; and, as he bade them all farewell, he appeared deeply affected. After some hesitation his advice was acquiesced in; and the assembly began to separate, two and three at a time. Emmet, having named a place to meet his Dublin friends on the morrow evening, consented to become my companion for the night; but, before we repaired to the cottage of our friend Denis, we thought it but right to pay a visit to Castle —, in order to afford my uncle such consolation as the nature of his bitter misfortunes admitted of. Denis, therefore, with much reluctance, consented to return without us, and make preparation for our reception, while a shrill whistle, from a person in attendance, brought Dwyer and his men to escort us over the hills.

As we approached the residence of my uncle, I found myself unable to resist the gloomy impressions which began to assail me. Allied by consanguinity to its late inmates, I could not but feel for the sorrows of the poor old man, and weep over the fate of my cousins. Malachy had his full share of my sympathy; for I looked upon his life as now forfeited to the violated laws; while Bryan, less talented, but more harmless, largely participated in my regret, though my acquaintance with him was very limited; for I seldom met him, even during my stay at the castle. To see my uncle, and condole with him, was now a work of duty; otherwise I should gladly have dispensed with the interview; even as it was I had nearly shrunk from the task.

When we arrived at the bridge before the castle, Dwyer sent one of his men to reconnoitre; and, on his return, we learned that my uncle was absent in Dublin, where he had gone on hearing the melancholy fate of his sons. It was, therefore, thought unnecessary to enter Knockfane, which was now filled with the lamentations of its inmates; and we made our way for the homely cottage of Denis,



where we found prepared for us a supper of new potatoes and bacon, on which we fared sumptuously, in company with the worthy peasant, and Dwyer, the extraordinary captain of the Wicklow banditti. After sup-

per we retired to repose in a small apartment above the kitchen; and Dwyer promised that some of his men should take care that our place of retreat was not obtruded upon.

#### THE IRISH PEASANTRY.

*By the Author of 'Tales of Irish Life.'*

THE first thing which must have struck every one acquainted with the habits and mode of thinking of the Irish peasantry is the prevalence of an opinion inimical to the laws of the land. The once well-founded notion of there being no justice for a Catholic has become hereditary; and its consequence is obvious in an open disrespect for all the legal institutions of the country. Individuals, it is true, are ready enough to avail themselves of the laws, for the purpose of gratifying malice or redressing wrongs; but, while they are thus righting themselves or oppressing their neighbours, they are still, as much as ever, persuaded that Ireland is ruled by arbitrary power, and not by a paternal government. In certain cases they are shrewd enough to discriminate; but respecting the views of the legislature there is only one opinion—and that opinion calculated for every thing but the promotion of harmony and content.

However this state of things may startle casual observers, a little reflection will show that it is the natural consequence of circumstances. There still live the sons of those who witnessed all the horrors of the penal laws; and the tales (no doubt greatly aggravated) of the hardships endured by the Catholics are still listened to with a feverish anxiety. The effects too of that iron code are yet felt, and the descendants of those who inflicted it on an unhappy people are still in power. The *priest-catcher* is succeeded by a bigoted Ascendancy-man, and an association of ideas is thus promoted in vulgar minds, which disables them from separating the present from the past, or drawing a line of distinction between the framers and the executors of the laws. Like the Indians, who imagined

that the horse and the rider formed only one animal, they too often identify the magistrate with the legislator.

Perhaps there was more reason in Sancho Panza's judgment, when he discharged the thief and punished the man who left the money in his way, than has been generally supposed; for, I believe, according to the canon law, he who exposes another to temptation is not to be considered entirely innocent. If we judge Irish magistrates by the same rule, many of their faults will be extenuated; and wofully criminal must those be who placed them in situations where *justice* was hardly to be expected from them. The abuse of power—according to all lawgivers, save Irish lawgivers—has generally been greatest where there was the least responsibility; and those who know Ireland will readily admit that it would be difficult to point out in what way an Irish magistrate became responsible to any terrestrial authority. It is useless to talk about superior courts when we are considering the situation of the peasantry; for, though the door of law be open, it is guarded by a Cerberus, which requires a golden opiate that the poor man can never supply. Even in England, where the rights of the subject are watched with a jealousy unknown to other countries, we find too many magistrates acting illegally, arbitrarily, and tyrannically. What, then, must the case be in Ireland, where the provincial press may be said to sleep, and where an aristocratic combination—powerful and extensive—exists to awe into silence the slightest complaint of the peasantry? I speak here, not of individuals, but of the Irish gentry collectively; who, I am sorry to say,\* notwithstanding

\* Perhaps this arises from the absence of persons of rank and consequence, whose example, if they resided in their own country, might counteract the bad habits of their inferiors. Absenteeism, even in this respect, is an evil; and, indeed I cannot agree with those who represent it, in any one respect, as harmless.



individual exceptions, are much inferior, at least in point of humanity and justice, to the same class in this country. English landlords, 'tis true, are not quite so indulgent or so forbearing as they are usually represented; but still they have a habitual reverence for the rights of persons, which is, alas! almost unknown in Ireland.

It has been said that the conduct of the servant indicates the character of the master; and it must be confessed that the subordinate agents of power in Ireland resemble very much their superiors. They are tyrants in miniature. Proofs of their delinquency are to be found every where throughout the country; and is it, therefore, any wonder that laws—even good laws—administered and executed by such agents, are disrespected? Justice, in ordinary cases, is to be had only by chance; but scarcely at all where the magistrate or his satellites has a political or personal interest in refusing it. This picture is not over-coloured. Things are certainly improved in this respect; but I fear not sufficiently to warrant any qualification of my statement.

It is, therefore, almost morally impossible that the Irish peasantry should pay that respect to the laws which the welfare of society requires, since their execution is intrusted to improper hands. It is useless to enquire here how this was to have been avoided, since we find its effect—a kind of social and political anarchy, in which the people are opposed to government, and individuals opposed to each other. Faction has been subdivided, and, like certain insects, it has vitality in all its parts. The Rockites and the Ribandmen are but a confederacy of the Darcys, the M'Mahons, Two and Three Year Olds, &c. &c.; for, when they are not fighting with the police, they are quarrelling among themselves.

These family factions are not to be considered as remnants of ancient clanship: they spring naturally from the suspicion that justice is not to be had. Ill-treated individuals, instead of applying, as in England, to a magistrate, wait for an opportunity of seeking personal satisfaction. Friends interfere on each side; numbers are implicated: and thus the original cause of quarrel is fre-

quently unknown, when thousands—from two neighbouring parishes—meet in hostile array. This pigmy warfare is attended with even worse consequences than the loss of half a dozen lives; it inspires a general spirit of revenge; begets a love of fighting and drinking; and finally promotes a disposition to associate for a redress of real or imaginary grievances, whether these be supposed to proceed from individuals or monopolists—from church or state. It may be, as some sages have thought, that these factions are an indicative of *peace*; but they should never forget that they ultimately terminate in an illegal combination, in which personal pique is merged in what is considered to be the general good. It must, however, be confessed, that the Irish peasantry love fighting, merely for sport; and this national propensity is strangely gratified. Magistrates, in some instances, have refused to interfere from political motives; and I have known more than one justice of the *peace* protect a faction in consideration of their reaping his harvest for him. These men, for several years, were the terror of a barony; but at length they were conquered by a rival faction, to which their atrocities had given birth. I believe their patron is still in the commission.

I have mentioned here only the most prominent of those causes which tend to keep alive, in the peasantry, a hereditary hatred of the government and the laws. It must be unnecessary to enumerate local grievances in proof of a fact which, I think, can hardly be disputed. The feeling is, with few exceptions, universal; and, unhappily, the means hitherto taken to eradicate it, have only helped to confirm opinions inimical to the public welfare. Coercion, on all occasions, was the weapon used by government to suppress discontent. Perhaps there had been no alternative left them. Whether that were the case it is unnecessary for me to inquire; my purpose is to show that its effects were the very opposite of those which a wise legislature would wish to obtain. A fearful exertion of power in despotic countries may terrify men into unwilling obedience; but, bad as things are in Ireland, the people still enjoy too much liberty to

have acquired the disposition of slaves, though there be too much slavery for them to feel all the moral obligations of freemen.

Every increase of power in the hands of the magistracy only leads to a further abuse; and, under the insurrection laws, the innocent are necessarily confounded with the guilty. The people are harassed by the minions of power, the business of life is interrupted, and the burdens of the peasantry are augmented, while the means of increased exertion are denied them. In the mean time the sanguinary code is in operation; hangings and transportations are hourly taking place; and the misfortune is, that the innocent too often suffer. This, under all the circumstances of the case, is inevitable. The laws are put into execution for the purpose of striking terror into the deluded; and, as the evidence before the officers of the crown is generally of a very doubtful character, they are obliged to decide as it were by chance, and have, it is to be feared, on more occasions than one, condemned to an ignominious death the victim of the perjurer. A people proverbially partial to justice are shocked at such a sacrifice; and the opprobrium attached to such a deed is excited at the expense of the laws. With minds pre-occupied by dislike of government, they seize with avidity on such a proof of injustice; and, in the excess of their execration, forget the many who deservedly suffered, as well as all the circumstances which palliate the conduct of the administrators of the laws. The populace, in their own opinion, are never wrong; and the Irish peasantry have notions respecting equity which lawyers cannot abide by. For instance, they cannot be persuaded that he who assists in doing an illegal deed is as guilty as the actual perpetrator; and nothing is more offensive, in their eyes, than visiting with legal penalties a man merely because he may have been caught in company with an illegal assembly. *Tendency* (though a word of great potency in the lawyers' vocabulary) is one entirely unknown to them; and they uniformly deny the justice of that punishment which falls on individuals, when others equally criminal are suffered to escape.

Besides believing themselves always in the right, and the government always in the wrong, coercion cannot disabuse them of their erroneous notions. On the contrary, it has an effect directly opposite; and the victim of the Insurrection Act is viewed by the peasantry as a martyr to their cause. His praise is sung, in very intelligible verse, for years afterwards, at each rustic assembly; and the honours thus bestowed on the criminal has a dangerous tendency in doing away with that salutary opprobrium which would otherwise be attached to an ignominious death. The man who would die, sooner than bring disgrace on his family, feels no shame in offering, as a Whiteboy, his neck to the executioner. By a natural association of ideas, therefore, the peasantry are too apt to extend their sympathy to all delinquents; for it is well known they will protect a man, though they know of and abominate his crime. Coercion certainly has produced, at times, a momentary tranquillity; but the government has ever found that Captain Rock, like the fabulous vampire, is indestructible. They may inflict on him twenty thousand deaths, but the first moonlight night reanimates him into an atrocious existence. The insurrection act, therefore, like the phoenix, only expires to be renewed.

To remedy this state of things, I own, is no easy task. Education, unless it commences with the old, is not likely to effect wonders in a hurry; for the political opinions of the father, in most instances, will be those of the son. Besides, education in Ireland, at present, is almost as extensive as it can be made. Something more is necessary than schools; and were I to venture on recommending a measure, it would be one to render more efficient, and less offensive, the constabulary forces now in existence. The magistrates in Ireland are incapacitated, by their habits and education, from being expounders of laws made to govern a free people: and such is the well-understood combination among them, that, were they even deprived of their commissions, they would nevertheless exercise a dangerous influence over any officer delegated to supply their places, unless he was of a character



and consequence superior to no ordinary temptations. From the state of religious and political parties in Ireland, such men are not likely to be found; and perhaps the government would be acting wisely in placing the administration of local justice, as they have the superintendence of the customs and excise, in the hands of Englishmen. From such a measure the happiest results might be anticipated, were proper persons chosen; for, as I have previously stated, the people of this country are educated in habits of reverence for the rights of the subject, to which the Irish aristocracy are strangers. Were Sir Richard Birnie to sit for a few months in any district of Munster, I will venture to predict that he would soon have the confidence of the peasantry, for of justice they are now as fond as their ancestors were in the days of Sir John Davis. An arrangement of this nature, however, would fail to produce all that might be effected, unless the political disabilities under which the Catholics labour were removed; for I am not sanguine enough to hope that Ireland will be happy while a single link of the penal fetters remain to the people. Perhaps even discontent might be banished by allowing Catholics to assist in the making of the laws. The peasantry would then feel that in an act of parliament there must be some reason and justice.

Having thus taken a brief view of the condition of the Irish peasantry, and the causes which contribute to the permanency of discontent among them, I cannot conclude without saying a few words on a subject to which is erroneously attributed a variety of evils. There is evidently a disposition in the legislature, and among speculative men, to oppose the present mode of letting farms in Ireland. This arises from *false* information; and those who gave evidence before the Select Committee relative to the subdivisions of lands took a very circumscribed view of the case. They must have drawn general conclusions from practical instances, and even these instances would not have warranted their conclusions. A father, say they, divides his farm equally among his children; but they forget that a case of this nature proves two

things. First—that small farms are difficult to be had; and, secondly, that the evil they wish to infer from such a proceeding is one that quickly produces its own cure. If boys and girls received a part of their father's holding as a portion, every new-married couple would have two farms. If they did not keep these in their own possession, it follows of course that for every small farm formed there would be a small farm to let; and thus every cottier would have an opportunity of enlarging his holding, thereby counteracting the folly of the original distribution.

But it is not true that this practice is any thing like general. On the contrary, farms in Ireland are every day increasing in size, and the work of comparative depopulation is going on rapidly, though silently. I have witnessed, within the last ten or fifteen years, the demolition of thousands of cottages, and on various occasions I have been a spectator of scenes such as Goldsmith describes. Not long since I saw fifty habitations levelled on one estate, and all in one parish, by order of the proprietor; and the people of America know well what numbers of the Irish peasantry land annually on their shores. On mountains and in sterile districts cottages have been erected, within the last twenty years, in great abundance; but they have, during the same period, been rapidly decreasing in the fertile valleys. In parts of the country where I resided, for many years, among a dense population, there are now comparatively few people; and in the very town-land where I spent my youth there remains not a single inhabitant. The farms of ten happy families form now the out-farm of a grazier. I could mention a hundred such instances, in the same county, of a decrease in the population.

I cannot help thinking that very erroneous notions have gone abroad respecting the rapid increase of the Irish population; and I have observed that people generally get married much younger in England than in Ireland. Among the Irish peasantry there is more foresight and prudence than they get credit for; and, indeed, for one instance of early marriage, in country parts, three are to be found in towns.



If we examine the question of population very closely, we shall find that the Irish are not such good breeders as is generally supposed.

Abundant proofs remain that Ireland was once densely peopled. Precise data, however, can nowhere be found, until within a period comprised in the last hundred and twenty years. Sir William Petty's survey was mere guess-work, and Mr. Beaumont's map is of equal authority. We come now to details with more pretension to accuracy. In 1731, by a poll-tax return, there was computed to be 2,010,221 people in Ireland. If this was ascertained by a census, we may reasonably conclude that not more than one-third were returned; for the period was peculiarly unfavorable to truth in a thing of this nature. The penal laws were in full force, and reports of Catholics and Protestants conspiring to murder each other were then current. Even were the precise object known and believed, still it would follow that not one-third would be returned. That this was the case appears plain from the Bishop of Dromore's statement, two years afterwards. According to Mr. Bushe, first commissioner of the revenue, whose statement is to be found in the 'Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy,' the number of houses in Ireland in 1789 was 621,484. Allowing six to each house, this would give a population of 3,728,904. The data on which all Mr. Bushe's tables were founded was evidently erroneous; for in two years afterwards Mr. Wray, inspector of hearth-money, furnished Parliament with details, from which it appeared that the number of houses was 701,102, which, at six to a house, gives 4,206,612. Now it is well known that cities crowded like those in Ireland always averaged more than six to a house. The population, therefore, in 1791, must have been, even according to this statement, more than the above number. But we have a proof of this; for Mr. Wray gave it subsequently as his opinion, 'that there was no truth of which he was more convinced than that not more than one-half of the exempted houses were returned. The number of such houses was 149,474, which, at six to a house, would give

a population of 896,844. That being added to the former number, the total would be 5,103,456. Add to this the surplus number for towns, and we have a population little short of what it is at present. Increase, therefore, has not been so rapid as has been generally supposed; and that the population now advances slowly, if at all, must be evident from the fact that, while the number of new houses built in England in 1821 was estimated at 25,361, not more than 1,350, were reported to have been erected in Ireland.

A great deal has been said relative to the system of the forty-shilling freeholders having a tendency to increase the subdivisions of farms. Their numbers, however, according to a return laid before Parliament during the last session, does not appear to be very formidable. To ascertain the precise number now in Ireland is impossible, though it strikes me, from an inspection of documents, that they have not, on the whole, increased for some years back. The following table will show, at one view, the number of persons who voted, forty-shilling freeholders and others, during the last elections at the different places where there was a contest, as well as the number of householders in the respective counties:—

Names of Counties where the election was contested.	Number of Freeholders who voted.	Number of Houses in each County.
Armagh . . . .	4,875	37,714
Dublin . . . .	1,557	21,987
Fermanagh . . .	1,988	22,912
Limerick . . . .	6,600	36,089
Longford . . . .	989	17,320
Queen's County .	5,613	23,077
Sligo . . . . .	1,723	24,246
Total . . . . .	23,345	183,345

From this it appears that, out of seven counties where the election was a contested one, not more than one householder out of every eight was qualified to vote. The 'Edinburgh Review' on this subject has not shown its usual ability; and I know, from personal observation, that the most comfortable *cottiers* in Ireland are those who are forty-shilling freeholders. Respecting their political influence it is not for me to decide.

## LETTERS ON ENGLAND.\*

THE author of these letters is the son of the celebrated Madame de Stael, and appears to have inherited a large portion of his mother's talents. In these letters he evinces much good sense, great candour, and a discriminating judgment. With political science he seems intimately acquainted; and, though a Frenchman, he gives—who would not?—a decided preference to the political institutions of England. At the same time he points out various anomalies; and, we think, successfully demonstrates the erroneous opinions of our economists respecting the division of property. Being a foreigner, he has inadvertently fallen into a few mistakes; but they are of a trivial nature, and form no drawback to the merits of his book.

M. de Stael Holstein, it appears, visited this country at two different periods, and resided here, during each visit, for a considerable time. His character in his own country was a sufficient passport to the best society here; but his book is not a journal of fashionable frivolities, and descriptions of towns or steam-boats. He prudently leaves such trifling things to those who can do nothing better, and boldly enters, like a philosopher and a legislator, into most important considerations. He treats of civilization—the division of property—the laws of primogeniture—political influence—aristocracy and democracy—public meetings—the functions of parliament—reform, &c. &c. Most of these subjects, though in some measure new to the French people, are perfectly familiar to our readers. As an analysis of the book must therefore be rather uninteresting, we shall confine ourselves to that portion of it which treats of matters more immediately novel and instructive.

M. de Stael draws an accurate comparison between the English and the French. The latter are too fond of generalizing every thing, and reducing, like mathematicians, all science to axioms. The effect of this is the finest theories in the world,

but total failures in practice. The English pursue another course.

‘I have witnessed,’ says he, ‘a still more striking instance of this disposition of the English to confine all questions within the sphere of the circumstances peculiar to England. In the session of 1822, Mr. Canuing made a motion tending to re-open the entrance of the Upper House to the Catholic peers, who were deprived of this privilege in consequence of the conspiracy, real or pretended, known by the name of the *popish plot*. This motion, after being carried through the House of Commons, was thrown out of the House of Peers after a very memorable debate. I was fortunate enough to be present on the occasion; and my memory records few intellectual treats comparable to the discussion of a subject so important, by orators ranking so high in talent as well as in society. Lords Erskine, Holland, Grey, Grenville, Liverpool, and the Chancellor, most of the leading members in the political bands, took an active part in the debate. The avowed object of the motion was to prepare the emancipation of the Catholics: on this ground it was attacked by its adversaries, and defended by the minority. It seems natural then to suppose, that the general principles of toleration would have an ample share in the discussion. By no means; they were not even touched upon: I will say more, no one thought of them. The particular interest of England absorbed the whole attention of the speakers, as well as of the public. It may be said, no doubt, that the general arguments were worn threadbare by seventeen years of discussion; and besides, that the policy of the minority, on this occasion, was to confine the question within its narrowest limits; but I nevertheless maintain, that my general position is fully borne out.

‘Lord Holland spoke with that vivacity of argument, which the heir of the name of Fox alone could combine with such a flow of feeling: but in this speech, which I was told re-

\* Letters on England, by A. De Stael-Holstein. Treuttel and Wortz, Treuttel, Jun. and Richter, London. 1825.



called to mind the happiest effusions of his uncle, he confined himself solely to proving, with a profound knowledge of the history of his country, the absurdity of the testimony that led to the condemnation of the Catholic Peers, or to refuting particular objections: while, familiar as the higher questions of morals and philosophy were to him, he never thought for a moment of dipping into their sphere.

'In another point of view I was not less struck with the speech of the Lord Chancellor. The ground of his reasoning was in fact this whimsical argument: if the Protestant cease to be the ruling religion of England, the Catholic must become so. And from the energy and warmth with which he spoke extempore, it was evident, that his conviction was sincere; and that a profound lawyer, a man grown old in the paths of legislation and politics, had never seriously admitted the idea, that a country might subsist without a ruling religion: so powerfully does whatever *is* appear what *must be*.

'Transfer the same subject of debate to the French tribune, unquestionably liberty of conscience, the connexion between civil and religious authority, the general principles in favour of toleration, would have constituted the subjects of every speech. It is equally evident that, under favourable circumstances, the public would have declared warmly for the question, so as to render all resistance to it impossible. So far the advantage is with us: at least it may be thought so. But these speeches, abundant perhaps in talent, would have made only a transient impression. The question so speedily carried, if the torrent of opinion or of power had run in its favour, would have been as speedily lost, if it had taken an opposite direction.

'In England old opinions are more difficult to be shaken, and notions as well as interests make an obstinate resistance: but when by dint of struggling an opinion has made a conquest, it is for ever; it does not suffer itself to be dispossessed.

'In 1819, we made a great step in the career of liberty: we had obtained a law on the suppression of abuses

of the press, which, notwithstanding some slight imperfections, was acknowledged by masters of the science, by the English lawyers themselves, as the best and most philosophical, that had hitherto existed in any country. But this law, ill understood by the public, harassed by unreasonable objections, even from those, who ought to have been most sensible of its advantages, was indebted for its success solely to the talents of a minister, and the complaisance of a majority. A few months had scarcely elapsed, before power changed hands, or, which is worse, the men in power changed their principles; the new law of the press ceased to exist, without leaving any traces of itself either in our jurisprudence or in our habits; and many years perhaps will pass away, before France can hope to recover possession of it.

'In England the struggle was long; Mr. Fox in parliament, and Lord Erskine at the bar, had more than one contest, and overthrew more than one formidable adversary, before they obtained for the jury the important prerogative of pronouncing on the criminality of a work, as well as the fact of its publication. But the longer the dispute continued, the greater was the interest taken in it by the public, and the more deeply were men's minds impressed with the importance of the question: and when at length Lord Erskine obtained from the king the noblest motto that ever adorned the arms of a statesman, *Trial by Jury*, the principle, the triumph of which was thus proclaimed, became an article of the political creed of England, that the most strenuous friends of power in the present day would scarcely think of contesting.

In proof of the influence of custom and habit on the English people, he instances the laws of primogeniture.

'It is not the law, therefore,' he says, 'which is an obstacle to a more equal division of landed property. This obstacle is found chiefly in the state of men's habits and way of thinking; and as in France a change of the law regulating inheritances would have scarcely any influence on the distribution of property, if the will of testators were left sufficiently free, so in England the abolition of the law of primogeniture would not destroy, or at least



would destroy very slowly, the almost universal opinion, which consigns to the eldest son the inheritance of the fortune, and the charge of sustaining the dignity of his family. To be the founder of a family, to leave a son and heir, as the English say, is the first thought of a man who enriches himself in any profession: and what would often appear to us an act of injustice seems to them so natural and necessary, that any objections offered to it would scarcely make the least impression on their minds.

‘Conversing one day with the head of an ancient house, the heir of an immense fortune, of which he is ready to make the noblest use at the call of patriotism or friendship, we spoke of his family, and I inquired after the situation of his brothers. “They are very well off,” he answered: “my father provided handsomely for them in his will; he left each of them a fortune of so many thousand pounds.” Now this fortune, which certainly would be deemed considerable on the Continent, was scarcely a third of the annual income of the eldest. Yet this eldest son, whose generosity is indisputable, far from being shocked at such a disproportion, considered the situation of his brothers as very respectable, and spoke of it to me with perfect satisfaction. Though I am tolerably accustomed to the habits and opinions of England, this was so much at variance with our ideas and moral feelings, that I could not avoid, by way of experiment, expressing my surprise at it to persons of different ranks and opinions. No one joined with me in opinion. They all thought, in fact, that the younger brothers had been kindly treated by their father, and that there were few families enjoying similar advantages. I will say more, younger brothers themselves are so thoroughly persuaded of the importance of the law of primogeniture, that, if a proposal were made to them to share alike with the head of the family, the majority would refuse it without hesitation.

‘That this way of thinking should be generally diffused through the higher ranks of society, indeed, is not very surprising: but, what is more so, it is equally prevalent in the working classes, and with men who have no other source of wealth than the labour of their hands. I have heard an anecdote on this subject, which is so characteristic, that I must beg leave to relate it.

‘A French iron-master, travelling in England some years since, to learn the progress made there in the manufacture of iron, went down into a coal mine, in one of those districts where radical opinions

were most generally diffused among the people. When in its subterranean galleries, he conversed with the workmen on the nature and duration of their labour, their wages, their food, and all the particulars of their way of life. The workmen on their part, interested in the conversation of a man who displayed an accurate knowledge of their concerns and wants, and engaged also by the liberality of the opinions he displayed, inquired in turn into the state of the labouring people in France. “How many workmen do you employ?” said they.—“Four or five hundred.” “That’s a pretty good number: and what wages do they earn? What does it cost to feed and maintain a family in the part of France where you live?”—“Their wages are lower than yours: but this is more than made up to them by the cheapness of the necessaries of life.”—“You are right,” said the miners, after having made a little calculation among themselves, which convinced them, that in reality the condition of the workmen was better in France than in England: “but how long do they work every day?”—“Eight hours on an average.”—“No more! And what do they do the rest of the day?”—“They cultivate their land, and work for themselves.”—“What do you say, their land? Then they have property? they have ground, they have houses of their own?”—“Certainly: at least most of those have, whom I employ.” At these words astonishment was depicted on every countenance. “And this land,” said the most intelligent of the miners, “what becomes of it at the father’s death?”—“It is divided among his children.”—“What equally?”—“Of course, or nearly so.”—“But a small plot of ground, divided among several children, must be reduced to nothing?”—“No; for if one of them be not rich enough to purchase the shares of his brothers, the ground is sold, and passes into the hands of some person, who can keep it entire and improve it.”

‘Here the conversation ended: but the two ideas, of workmen who were landholders, and of an equal division among the children, had so powerfully struck the English miners, that on the following Sunday they formed the subject of a regular discussion at one of those clubs, in which men, even of the lowest class, meet to read the news, or converse on their common interests; clubs, where the forms of sound deliberation are much better observed in general, than we find them in France in political assemblies of a much higher cast. After a long debate, the matter was put to the vote; and the majority decided, that it was no doubt advantageous for workmen to be landholders;

but that the inheritance should go to the eldest son, and not be divided.

'Here then we have workmen, low-born, radicals in their opinions or political sentiments, who decide against an equal participation, and in favour of the rights of primogeniture. It would be difficult to adduce a stronger proof of the universal sway of this mode of thinking in England.'

The law of entail, which has *brutalized* the aristocracy of Italy and Spain, meets in our author a determined, but an enlightened opponent. In England this law is easily obviated; but still its effects are quite visible.

M. de Stael's arguments on this question are philosophical and plain. 'A nation,' says he, 'as well as an individual, has nothing to subsist on but its income; that is to say, the rent of its land, the interest of its capital, and the wages of its labour. No doubt, this or that distribution of wealth may improve the cultivation of the soil, promote the increase of capital, or render labour more productive; yet these various improvements have their limits in the nature of things, beyond which it is not in the power of man to proceed.'

'When a nation has really made some progress; when by its industry, its natural resources, and its economy, new riches have been created, it may confer the privilege of enjoying them on a certain number of citizens, without the rest of the community being impoverished. But in a given degree of wealth, one class cannot be favoured unless at the expense of others; what is given to privileged persons, under whatever title, is necessarily taken from the rest of the citizens, and a difference of distribution does not render the whole of a nation either richer or poorer.'

'This truth is so obvious, that it appears almost ridiculous to announce it; yet there is none more habitually misunderstood by most of those who reason on political economy, I do not say in the drawing-room merely, but in books written expressly on the subject. Every one makes this or that class wealthy, and assigns this or that employment to capital, as his opinion, interest, or whim leads him: but the simple idea, that nothing comes out of nothing, and that by giving to one we take from

another, never enters the mind of these reasoners. A country left to the management of these speculators would be nearly in the condition of Swift's gentleman, who had five thousand a year, but all whose servants attempted to apply the whole of his income to the department particularly under his care. "For five thousand a year," said the coachman, "my master can have a noble set of horses and carriages." "With five thousand a year," said the cook, "my master can keep open house;" and thus the poor gentleman found himself ruined.

'It is this common error, that has led some men, even such as are well versed in the science of finance, the celebrated Hamilton of America, among others, to consider a public debt as wealth; because, he says, this debt is an exchangeable property, that attracts foreign capital; without reflecting, that in this case the foreign capital only takes the place of the national capital that has been consumed, and that the interest produced by this new capital is exactly balanced by the taxes paid by the people.'

'It is in consequence of the same error, that the too positive enemies of the funding system, or men who are interested in paying their court to the landholders, propose the reduction of the capital or interest of the debt, an arbitrary change of the conditions stipulated with the creditors, in short, a general or partial bankruptcy, as an efficacious method of alleviating the burdens of the nation. They do not consider, that the proprietors of the public funds will be impoverished by every sum bestowed on the payers of taxes; and that consequently the sum total of the wealth of the nation remains the same, except that a violent transfer of property involves in ruin and despair the classes that are robbed; and that by first suspending the demand, and afterward changing its nature, all the calculations of trade and industry are deranged.'

'In fine, the same error is the base of the common-place observation, that the partisans of the law of primogeniture never fail to repeat.

'The eldest son, say they, by being the depositary of the whole of the



property, maintains the dignity of the family; and serves as a support to his sisters, who, though without fortunes, obtain through the splendour of his name, honourable or advantageous matches, and at all events are secure of an asylum in the paternal mansion. On the other hand, the younger brothers, receiving no fortunes from their father, feel the necessity of procuring one by their own industry; accordingly they embrace some lucrative profession, marry ladies possessed of property, or obtain civil or military employments, or ecclesiastical preferment, through the influence of their elder brother; and if they fail in their endeavours, they return and settle with the head of the family, and live on a portion of his income. In this manner the elder branch preserves the property and its lustre; and the younger branches may in turn become the stock of new families rising to wealth and power. On the contrary, if the property were divided among the children, it would be dissipated at the end of a few generations, and general poverty would be the necessary consequence of this progressive subdivision.

‘I need not now inquire, whether it be a very pleasant circumstance to the younger children, to enjoy no independence, to be obliged to adopt the tastes of their elder brother, bend to his whims, and have recourse to his generosity for every undertaking that requires any pecuniary resource; as I have engaged here to consider the law of primogeniture merely as a question of political economy. In examining the trite arguments of the partisans of this system, then, let us adopt the method of geometers, who assume a problem as solved, and then examine the consequences.

‘Let us suppose a country, where every species of property belongs exclusively to the first born of each family. What will become of the younger children? they can have but two alternatives; either to reside in the house of the eldest, and live on his means, or to enrich themselves by obtaining some public office. In the first case, admitting it to be strictly obligatory on the eldest to maintain his brothers, they will be joint pro-

prietors of his income; which, in a pecuniary view, and leaving moral considerations out of the question, will amount to the same thing, as if they possessed a portion of the capital corresponding to this income. In the second case, that of enriching themselves by public offices, the portion of the revenues of the state, that forms their salary, will be the produce of taxes, or a sacrifice on the part of those who pay them; and these, on our hypothesis, can be no other than the elder brothers: so that thus the younger will become proprietors of a portion of the income or capital of the elder, according as the taxes are of such a kind as to affect the one or the other; and thus in an economical view, without entering into the field of politics, the general state of the country will be the same, as if the division of property had been effected in the bosom of each family, instead of being produced indirectly through the medium of taxation.’

We come now to a subject on which we have already spent—we hope not idle—some arguments. In opposition to the English economists we have advocated the utility of small farms; and it is no trifling satisfaction to find our opinions confirmed by M. de Stael. We are perpetually referred to France for proofs of the mischiefs which flow from the subdivisions of farms. Arthur Young, many years ago, prophesied that if a law was not passed to prohibit the multiplication of *cottiers*—for France has her *cottiers*—famine would be the result; as an increase of population beyond the means of subsistence must follow, according to his opinion, as a thing of course. Since that time a law not to prohibit but to encourage the subdivision of farms, was passed; and what has been the consequence?

‘It was,’ says M. De Stael, ‘much less by increasing the subdivision of estates, than by causing them to pass into more industrious hands, that the revolution so powerfully increased the substantial welfare of France. This subdivision is much more ancient than they are willing to suppose, who charge the revolution with all the mistakes of their minds or passions. It was formerly observed by Machiavel, that, though France was a poor country, the



people were happier than others, because there was scarcely a peasant who had not some little inheritance. The equal division of property existed from the remotest times in the provinces where the old Roman law prevailed; and it was previous to the sale of the national property, that the consequences of this system to France alarmed Arthur Young. Since that period the subdivision has increased, immense capitals have been swallowed up by the wars of the revolution, yet who can compare France now with the France of 1789, without being struck by the increase of the national wealth?

‘I have no hesitation in believing, that every artificial direction given to capital by the legislature, every shackle imposed on the division or circulation of property, is detrimental on any hypothesis.’

Our most celebrated writers have, as our author remarks, something vague and desultory on the question, and seems to experience a sort of interior struggle between prejudice and obvious conclusions. Mr. Malthus and Mr. M'Culloch have not escaped this defect; but M. de Stael informs us, that he heard Mr. Ricardo express a very different opinion; and, as he adds, his name alone is a host.

‘The English,’ says our author, ‘who attack the equality of division, commonly figure to themselves the inheritance of the father shared between ten or twelve children; each of these marrying, and having in turn ten or twelve children more; so that the last would receive only a hundredth or a hundred and forty-fourth part of his grandfather's property. But this is not the course of things in the world. In fact, if the increase of population followed such a progression, a single family would overspread the whole of the habitable earth in less than ten generations.’

‘What then is the real state of France? Does the parcelling out of estates go on increasing in so alarming a manner? By no means. On the contrary, we see in the neighbourhood of rich towns, and in general in every part where capitals accumulate through trade and manufactures, that landed estates have a tendency to enlarge. It is true, in provinces destitute of these advantages, in Brittany for example, the division of inheritances is carried much too far; but even in such provinces the interests of agriculture will set limits to this cantling. Already it is not uncommon, in various parts of France, to see a family of peasants agree, that one of the brothers shall remain proprietor of the paternal farm. The rest receive from him either a sum of money, or a portion of the profits,

and remain with him as farm servants, to avoid losing the advantages of farming on a large scale, or to preserve the respectability attached to the long possession of the same inheritance. For it is to be observed, in the present state of men's minds, this sort of aristocratical feeling is much more common in the lower than in the middle classes.

‘Nothing too is more common, both in France and Switzerland, than to see the possessor of a small estate farming one more extensive. I would even say, that a great majority of the farmers are landholders also. The day labourer they employ, is often master of a cot that serves to shelter his family, a garden that feeds his children, and a little field that he can cultivate when he is unemployed, and which enables him to maintain with less inequality the fearful struggle of laborious poverty against exacting wealth. From this general state of things arises a degree of happiness not to be disdained even if attended with no other advantage; but which becomes one of the happiest results that the social order is capable of producing, when, as we see in the Protestant parts of Switzerland, it is guaranteed by free institutions, and ennobled by a general diffusion of knowledge.

‘It is universally an object of ambition with the French peasant, to become the proprietor of a little plot of ground, or to enlarge what he has received from his forefathers. This propensity is of ancient date, and the revolution merely strengthened it, by furnishing him with opportunities of easily gratifying it. This desire, it must be confessed, is not always exercised judiciously: in general he gives more for land than it is worth, because, labour being the necessary condition of his life, he reckons it as nothing when he calculates the produce of the soil; so that an estate, which, if sold in a lump, would fetch a price only proportionate to its rent, sells in detail after the rate of its gross produce. Our peasants therefore might derive more advantage from their savings, either by placing them in the funds, or in saving banks; or by farming the land of others, and employing their little capitals in the purchase of stock and agricultural implements; as thus they would obtain much greater interest for their money. But their superstitious predilection for landed property is easily explained. In a country where an uninterrupted succession of public bankruptcies had annihilated confidence, where trade and manufactures were fettered in a thousand ways, where justice was impotent, where the relations between the powerful and the weak, the rich and the poor, were

in the hands of arbitrary power, men of the labouring class must have been habituated to trust only to solid and palpable wealth.

'In England, on the contrary, where every kind of right guaranteed by the law is inexpugnable; where the stability of all things is carried to excess; where public opinion, going hand in hand with financial science, has always caused the engagements of the state towards its creditors to be respected; the possessor of a small capital has justly thought, that the purchase of land was not the most profitable way in which he could employ it. Even they, whose habits and inclinations have rendered them attached to agriculture, have preferred renting farms to purchasing; and the length of leases has given farmers many of the advantages as well as enjoyments annexed to the possession of them. In fact, if we calculate the chances of human life, and the various circumstances that may abridge its duration, or change the condition of individuals, we shall find, that possession secured for a long term of years differs very little from absolute proprietorship, and that the difference between them is greater in the eyes of imagination than in those of reason.'

'That England has risen above almost every other country in Europe, by the progress of its agriculture, is incontestable; but I have not here to inquire what are the different causes, that, under the omnipotent agis of liberty, have produced this result; neither is it incumbent on me to prove, that it is in no degree owing to entails, or the law of primogeniture. In fact if we reflect, that in Italy, in Spain, and wherever else the system of irresponsible freehold succession has been introduced, it has occasioned the deterioration of land, and the impoverishment even of those for whose benefit it was invented, we shall be convinced, that the agricultural prosperity of England must be ascribed to other causes. If a tree abounding in sap be planted in a fertile soil, it may be subjected to a bad system of management perhaps with impunity, its natural vigour may triumph over the obstacles opposed to its growth; but we must not ascribe to the errors of the manager, what is owing to its strength of vegetation.'

It is perfectly ridiculous to hear our economists talking about small

farms as having a tendency to encourage early marriages. Employment in manufactures is by far a greater inducement; and facts demonstrate that the population increases faster in manufacturing than in agricultural districts.

'The English economists,' says M. de Stael, 'in general so able at observing facts, and drawing just inferences from them, have their minds for the most part so warped on the question of the division of property, that the most palpable truths escape them. The population of France in 1789, according to the reports of the Constituent Assembly, was 26,300,000: it is now about 30,000,000. This, certain English writers represent to us as an alarming fact; while they forget, that the number of inhabitants of England and Wales has risen from 9,168,000 to 12,218,000. Thus the population of France has increased fourteen per cent. in thirty-five years, amounting to eight per cent. in twenty years; and during the same twenty years the increase of the population in England has been thirty-three per cent, or four times as much. Such a rapid increase sufficiently proves, that the concentration of landed property has not all the efficacy that is ascribed to it, in keeping up a due balance between the quantity of food and number of its consumers. I will even go farther: I will venture to assert, that entails and the law of primogeniture have a tendency to increase the number of children in the higher classes, nearly in the same way as the poor rates tend to the augmentation of indigent families; namely, by preventing the father from cautiously looking forward to the lot that awaits his children.'

What will our Macculloch's say to this? When we come to consider the state of the English peasantry, we shall show the misery large farms have generated among a once honest, frugal, and hardy people.



RORY O'ROURKE, ESQ. TO THE EDITOR.

TRAVELS IN IRELAND—BIBLICALS—  
EDUCATION—MECHANIC INSTITU-  
TIONS—EDINBURGH AND QUAR-  
TERLY REVIEWS—POPE'S WORKS  
—THE LAUREATE'S TALE OF PA-  
RAGUAY.

MY DEAR EDITOR,—I herewith send you the MS. of my Travels in Ireland; which, I have no doubt, you will find quite as instructive as they are entertaining. You may print them in the Magazine if you wish; and indeed I think it would be your interest to give them the lead next month. You know how impartial and candid I am. In all my accounts you will find truth—the whole truth—and nothing but the truth. I state this, lest you should doubt the veracity of certain passages, wherein it is written that I travelled across the Galties in a turf-kish, and spent two nights and part of two days with Captain Rock on *Sleibh-na-maun*. Such, I assure you, was really the case.

The Biblicals are in a devil of a way in Ireland. Dr. M'Sweeny has *gugged* them; and Mr. Kensilla has detected a *fellow* of Trinity College, misquoting the holy fathers. Dr. Magee, where are you? For shame! Will you let *Priests*—mere professors in an Irish Catholic College—triumph over the learned teachers in old Trinity? Will you let it go forth to the world, that one of that race, whom you—on your oath—calumniated, is more learned than Mr. Singer, a man who subjoins F.T.C. and half a dozen other letters to his name?

The tables are now completely turned. It appears after all that Protestants, and not Catholics, are opposed to education. The Archbishop of Dublin has sworn that he is an enemy to educating the people; and Dr. Miller, of Armagh, and a hundred other *Protestant* ecclesiastics, have personally opposed the establishment of mechanics' institutions. But the stimulus lately given to the progress of knowledge by the foundation of these institutions throughout the country cannot be controlled. Ireland is, happily, following the example of her more fortunate sister; and I expect, before six months elapse, to hear of one of these institutions being established in every

town, ay, and village too, in my native country. The last '*Edinburgh Review*' contains a useful article, though not well written by-the-by, on this subject; and the '*Quarterly*'—the churchman's oracle—has a very extraordinary essay on Mechanics' Institutions. The article reminds one of Dr. Johnson's '*Life of Milton*.' It blows hot and cold at the same time, and would condemn the education of the *operatives* altogether if it dared. Happily the sense of the community controls the writer, who, Goth as he is, partially yields to the streams of opinion which he is unable to stem. 'We must refer,' says he, 'to the state of society as the cause of corruption, if the minds of the people are corrupted: a state which collects numbers together gives them the opportunity of wasting their leisure and their earnings at the haunts of vulgar dissipation, and facilitates the diffusion of periodical sedition from one corner of the kingdom to the other.'

"Hinc labor ille domûs, et inextricabilis error."

'Certainly, therefore, we are inclined rather to hope for good than to anticipate evil, from any new objects of interest which may tend to withdraw men out of the seminaries of depravity, and engage them in better things. These institutes are an experiment of this kind; on the success of which we dare not be enthusiastic, and yet are not willing to speak the language of discouragement. We are told, indeed, and truly told, that the best place for a workman, whose daily labour has been discharged, is the bosom of his family, his own fireside. And if we believed that the practical effect of these lectures would be to detach men from their homes and break up their domestic comforts, we should deem the argument against them insuperable. But it is notorious that the habits of these workmen are not generally domestic. Their "sweet colloquial pleasures are but few." They have hitherto sought for relaxation abroad, and taken it mixed with moral poison. Whatever tends to elevate the man will be a boon to the family. We apprehend no petitions against

the institutes from wives or children.' \* \* \*

'So far are we from grudging the people information on these points, that we regret the obstacles which exist in the way of their attaining it; from the want, at present, of familiar treatises to instruct them, and from their own inadequate leisure. It would be a real blessing if the working classes could be made acquainted with some of the fundamental principles of political economy; such as the laws of population; the causes of the inequality of mankind; the circumstances which regulate the market of corn, or the market of labour. They would then perceive that inequality does not originate in the encroachments of the rich or the enactments of the powerful, but has been necessarily coeval with society itself in all its stages; they would learn that the recompense of labour is governed by definitive principles, and must be determined, on the whole, by the number of candidates for employ. We sincerely wish them to understand these things fully, and are grateful for any measures which may tend to diffuse such knowledge. The perplexity, which the system of poor laws has introduced in England, makes a subject, never very simple, doubly intricate; and has practically tended to involve domestic economy with public government, and to connect the idea of private distress with the administration of the laws. He would do the state good service, who would put these matters into a popular intelligible form; and the knowledge thus disseminated would be an excellent preliminary to a measure never to be lost sight of, the gradual abolition of some of those objectionable parts of the poor laws, which are equally condemned by reason and experience, and by which no one is ultimately more aggrieved than the operative workman himself.

'After saying all this, shall we seem inconsistent in expressing less confidence of the effects of these institutions than the most sanguine of their supporters? At least we ought to give our reasons. And our reasons are, that we find these lectures on natural philosophy, and these books on science, treated by their advocates as the education of the people:

whereas, in fact, these are but a part of education, and comparatively an unimportant part; i. e. a part that may be better spared than some other acquirements of which no mention is made. The man may have attained a knowledge of geometry or chemistry surprising in his station; but if he has attained nothing else, he is very far from being trained up to be a happy man, or a good citizen. These arts *perish in the using*; man returns to his dust, and then all his thoughts perish: we wish to see him possessed of thoughts which shall not so perish.

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'Here probably we shall be thought to show the cloven foot not so much of bigotry as of the policy which would make religion subservient to its own purposes. Why may we not as justly complain, it will be asked, of any of our great philosophical or literary societies, that they have no religious tendency? Why must religion be mixed up with every thing in which the *lower* classes are concerned any more than with the higher?'

I have always made it a rule to suspect the man who proclaims his own honesty; and I think the allusion to the 'cloven foot,' a proof of what was passing at the time in the writer's mind. The article concludes with an encomium on Infant Schools—establishments not unlike the Charter Schools in Ireland—founded for the purpose of recruiting followers for the church. The result, no doubt, will be similar to what has happened to the kidnapping institutions on the other side of the Channel.

Have you seen the last '*Quarterly Review*?' All the articles are so mediocre that while you are restrained from praising, there is nothing in them worth censuring. The first article is a defence of Pope—which I would have done much better myself. But it is below the dignity of criticism to contend with such a creature as sonneteering Bowles; whose remarks on Pope reminds one of the fabled fly, who found fault with the dome of St. Paul's.

The '*Tale of Paraguay*,' by the Laureate, is, of course, praised in the *Quarterly*; but there is a drawback tantamount to complete censure.

Yours, in a hurry,

RORY O'ROURKE.

Bedford Square.